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William Hazlitt.

From the bust executed by Joseph Durham R.A.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY A. R. WALLER
AND ARNOLD GLOVER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
W. E. HENLEY

The Plain Speaker.
Essay on the Principles
of Human Action
Etc.

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THE PLAIN SPEAKER



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The Plain Speaker: Opinions on Books, Men, and Things, appeared anonymously in 1826 in two volumes (9 × 5¾ inches), published by Henry Colburn, New Burlington Street. The imprint behind both title-pages is 'London: Printed by Thomas Davison, Whitefriars'; but that at the end of the second volume is 'London: Printed by J. Nichols and Son, Parliament Street.' A list of 'Interesting Works, Just published by Henry Colburn,' at the end of the work contains an announcement of 'The Spirits of the Age . . . The Second Edition, with Additions' (see vol. IV. p. 186, Bibliographical Note to *The Spirit of the Age*).

In the edition which was published in 1851, edited by his son, the Essay entitled 'On a Portrait of a Lady, by Vandyke' is not included: it was transferred to 'Criticisms on Art.'

In the present issue the Essays have been numbered consecutively: in the original two-volume edition the 'Second Series' began with Essay I. 'On the Qualifications Necessary to Success in Life.'

See also Bibliographical Note to *Table Talk*.





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steady themselves, mount into a sustained and measured prose (like the translation of Ossian's Poems, or some parts of Shaftesbury's Characteristics) which is more odious still, and as bad as being at sea in a calm. Dr. Johnson's style (particularly in his Rambler,) is not free from the last objection. There is a tune in it, a mechanical recurrence of the same rise and fall in the clauses of his sentences, independent of any reference to the meaning of the text, or progress or inflection of the sense. There is the alternate roll of his cumbrous cargo of words; his periods complete their revolutions at certain stated intervals, let the matter be longer or shorter, rough or smooth, round or square, different or the same. This monotonous and balanced mode of composition may be compared to that species of portrait-painting which prevailed about a century ago, in which each face was cast in a regular and preconceived mould. The eye-brows were arched mathematically as if with a pair of compasses, and the distances between the nose and mouth, the forehead and chin, determined according to a 'foregone conclusion,' and the features of the identical individual were afterwards accommodated to them, how they could![1]

Horne Tooke used to maintain that no one could write a good prose style, who was not accustomed to express himself *vivâ voce*, or to talk in company. He argued that this was the fault of Addison's prose, and that its smooth, equable uniformity, and want of sharpness and spirit, arose from his not having familiarised his ear to the sound of his own voice, or at least only among friends and admirers, where there was but little collision, dramatic fluctuation, or sudden contrariety of opinion to provoke animated discussion, and give birth to different intonations and lively transitions of speech. His style (in this view of it) was not indented, nor did it project from the surface. There was no stress laid on one word more than another—it did not hurry on or stop short, or sink or swell with the occasion: it was throughout equally insipid, flowing, and harmonious, and had the effect of a studied recitation rather than of a natural discourse. This would not have happened (so the Member for Old Sarum contended) had Addison laid himself out to argue at his club, or to speak in public; for then his ear would have caught the necessary modulations of sound arising out of the feeling of the moment, and he would have transferred them unconsciously to paper. Much might be said on both sides of this question[2]: but Mr. Tooke was himself an unintentional confirmation

[1] See the Portraits of Kneller, Richardson, and others.

[2] Goldsmith was not a talker, though he blurted out his good things now and then: yet his style is gay and voluble enough. Pope was also a silent man; and his prose is timid and constrained, and his verse inclining to the monotonous.

of his own argument; for the tone of his written compositions is as flat and unraised as his manner of speaking was hard and dry. Of the poet it is said by some one, that

> 'He murmurs by the running brooks
> A music sweeter than their own.'

On the contrary, the celebrated person just alluded to might be said to grind the sentences between his teeth, which he afterwards committed to paper, and threw out crusts to the critics, or *bon-mots* to the Electors of Westminster (as we throw bones to the dogs,) without altering a muscle, and without the smallest tremulousness of voice or eye[1]! I certainly so far agree with the above theory as to conceive that no style is worth a farthing that is not calculated to be read out, or that is not allied to spirited conversation: but I at the same time think the process of modulation and inflection may be quite as complete, or more so, without the external enunciation; and that an author had better try the effect of his sentences on his stomach than on his ear. He may be deceived by the last, not by the first. No person, I imagine, can dictate a good style; or spout his own compositions with impunity. In the former case, he will flounder on before the sense or words are ready, sooner than suspend his voice in air; and in the latter, he can supply what intonation he pleases, without consulting his readers. Parliamentary speeches sometimes read well aloud; but we do not find, when such persons sit down to write, that the prose-style of public speakers and great orators is the best, most natural, or varied of all others. It has almost always either a professional twang, a mechanical rounding off, or else is stunted and unequal. Charles Fox was the most rapid and even *hurried* of speakers; but his written style halts and creeps slowly along the ground[2].—A speaker is

[1] As a singular example of steadiness of nerves, Mr. Tooke on one occasion had got upon the table at a public dinner to return thanks for his health having been drank. He held a bumper of wine in his hand, but he was received with considerable opposition by one party, and at the end of the disturbance, which lasted for a quarter of an hour, he found the wine glass still full to the brim.

[2] I have been told, that when Sheridan was first introduced to Mr. Fox, what cemented an immediate intimacy between them was the following circumstance. Mr. Sheridan had been the night before to the House of Commons; and being asked what his impression was, said he had been principally struck with the difference of manner between Mr. Fox and Lord Stormont. The latter began by declaring in a slow, solemn, drawling, nasal tone that 'when he considered the enormity and the unconstitutional tendency of the measures just proposed, he was hurried away in a torrent of passion and a whirlwind of impetuosity,' pausing between every word and syllable; while the first said (speaking with the rapidity of lightning, and with breathless anxiety and impatience), that 'such was the magnitude, such the importance, such the vital interest of this question, that he

necessarily kept within bounds in expressing certain things, or in pronouncing a certain number of words, by the limits of the breath or power of respiration: certain sounds are observed to join in harmoniously or happily with others: an emphatic phrase must not be placed, where the power of utterance is enfeebled or exhausted, &c. All this must be attended to in writing, (and will be so unconsciously by a practised hand,)or there will be *hiatus in manuscriptis*. The words must be so arranged, in order to make an efficient readable style, as 'to come trippingly off the tongue.' Hence it seems that there is a natural measure of prose in the feeling of the subject and the power of expression in the voice, as there is an artificial one of verse in the number and co-ordination of the syllables; and I conceive that the trammels of the last do not (where they have been long worn) greatly assist the freedom or the exactness of the first.

Again, in poetry, from the restraints in many respects, a greater number of inversions, or a latitude in the transposition of words is allowed, which is not conformable to the strict laws of prose. Consequently, a poet will be at a loss, and flounder about for the common or (as we understand it) *natural* order of words in prose-composition. Dr. Johnson endeavoured to give an air of dignity and novelty to his diction by affecting the order of words usual in poetry. Milton's prose has not only this draw-back, but it has also the disadvantage of being formed on a classic model. It is like a fine translation from the Latin; and indeed, he wrote originally in Latin. The frequency of epithets and ornaments, too, is a resource for which the poet finds it difficult to obtain an equivalent. A direct, or simple prose-style seems to him bald and flat; and, instead of forcing an interest in the subject by severity of description and reasoning, he is repelled from it altogether by the absence of those obvious and meretricious allurements, by which his senses and his imagination have been hitherto stimulated and dazzled. Thus there is often at the same time a want of splendour and a want of energy in what he writes, without the invocation of the Muse—*invita Minervâ*. It is like setting a rope-dancer to perform a tumbler's tricks—the hardness of the ground jars his nerves; or it is the same thing as a painter's attempting to carve a block of marble for the first time—the coldness chills him, the colourless uniformity distracts him, the precision of form demanded disheartens him. So in prose-writing, the severity of composition required damps the enthusiasm, and cuts off the resources of the poet.

could not help imploring, he could not help adjuring the House to come to it with the utmost calmness, the utmost coolness, the utmost deliberation.' This trait of discrimination instantly won Mr. Fox's heart.

He is looking for beauty, when he should be seeking for truth; and aims at pleasure, which he can only communicate by increasing the sense of power in the reader. The poet spreads the colours of fancy, the illusions of his own mind, round every object, *ad libitum*; the prose-writer is compelled to extract his materials patiently and bit by bit, from his subject. What he adds of ornament, what he borrows from the pencil, must be sparing, and judiciously inserted. The first pretends to nothing but the immediate indulgence of his feelings: the last has a remote practical purpose. The one strolls out into the adjoining fields or groves to gather flowers: the other has a journey to go, sometimes through dirty roads, and at others through untrodden and difficult ways. It is this effeminacy, this immersion in sensual ideas, or craving after continual excitement, that spoils the poet for his prose-task. He cannot wait till the effect comes of itself, or arises out of the occasion: he must force it upon all occasions, or his spirit droops and flags under a supposed imputation of dulness. He can never drift with the current, but is always hoisting sail, and has his streamers flying. He has got a striking simile on hand; he *lugs* it in with the first opportunity, and with little connexion,and so defeats his object. He has a story to tell: he tells it in the first page, and where it would come in well, has nothing to say; like Goldsmith, who having to wait upon a Noble Lord, was so full of himself and of the figure he should make, that he addressed a set speech, which he had studied for the occasion, to his Lordship's butler, and had just ended as the nobleman made his appearance. The prose ornaments of the poet are frequently beautiful in themselves, but do not assist the subject. They are pleasing excrescences—hindrances, not helps in an argument. The reason is, his embellishments in his own walk grow out of the subject by natural association; that is, beauty gives birth to kindred beauty, grandeur leads the mind on to greater grandeur. But in treating a common subject, the link is truth, force of illustration, weight of argument, not a graceful harmony in the immediate ideas; and hence the obvious and habitual clue which before guided him is gone, and he hangs on his patch-work, tinsel finery at random, in despair, without propriety, and without effect. The poetical prose-writer stops to describe an object, if he admires it, or thinks it will bear to be dwelt on: the genuine prose-writer only alludes to or characterises it in passing, and with reference to his subject. The prose-writer is master of his materials: the poet is the slave of his style. Every thing showy, every thing extraneous tempts him, and he reposes idly on it: he is bent on pleasure, not on business. He aims at effect, at captivating the reader, and yet is contented with common-place ornaments, rather than none. Indeed, this last result

must necessarily follow, where there is an ambition to shine, without the effort to dig for jewels in the mine of truth. The habits of a poet's mind are not those of industry or research: his images come to him, he does not go to them; and in prose-subjects, and dry matters of fact and close reasoning, the natural stimulus that at other times warms and rouses, deserts him altogether. He sees no unhallowed visions, he is inspired by no day-dreams. All is tame, literal, and barren, without the Nine. Nor does he collect his strength to strike fire from the flint by the sharpness of collision, by the eagerness of his blows. He gathers roses, he steals colours from the rainbow. He lives on nectar and ambrosia. He 'treads the primrose path of dalliance,' or ascends 'the highest heaven of invention,' or falls flat to the ground. *He is nothing, if not fanciful!*

I shall proceed to explain these remarks, as well as I can, by a few instances in point.

It has always appeared to me that the most perfect prose-style, the most powerful, the most dazzling, the most daring, that which went the nearest to the verge of poetry, and yet never fell over, was Burke's. It has the solidity, and sparkling effect of the diamond: all other *fine writing* is like French paste or Bristol-stones in the comparison. Burke's style is airy, flighty, adventurous, but it never loses sight of the subject; nay, is always in contact with, and derives its increased or varying impulse from it. It may be said to pass yawning gulfs 'on the unstedfast footing of a spear:' still it has an actual resting-place and tangible support under it—it is not suspended on nothing. It differs from poetry, as I conceive, like the chamois from the eagle: it climbs to an almost equal height, touches upon a cloud, overlooks a precipice, is picturesque, sublime—but all the while, instead of soaring through the air, it stands upon a rocky cliff, clambers up by abrupt and intricate ways, and browzes on the roughest bark, or crops the tender flower. The principle which guides his pen is truth, not beauty—not pleasure, but power. He has no choice, no selection of subject to flatter the reader's idle taste, or assist his own fancy: he must take what comes, and make the most of it. He works the most striking effects out of the most unpromising materials, by the mere activity of his mind. He rises with the lofty, descends with the mean, luxuriates in beauty, gloats over deformity. It is all the same to him, so that he loses no particle of the exact, characteristic, extreme impression of the thing he writes about, and that he communicates this to the reader, after exhausting every possible mode of illustration, plain or abstracted, figurative or literal. Whatever stamps the original image more distinctly on the mind, is welcome. The nature of his task precludes continual beauty; but it does not pre-

clude continual ingenuity, force, originality. He had to treat of political questions, mixed modes, abstract ideas, and his fancy (or poetry, if you will) was ingrafted on these artificially, and as it might sometimes be thought, violently, instead of growing naturally out of them, as it would spring of its own accord from individual objects and feelings. There is a resistance in the *matter* to the illustration applied to it—the concrete and abstract are hardly co-ordinate; and therefore it is that, when the first difficulty is overcome, they must agree more closely in the essential qualities, in order that the coincidence may be complete. Otherwise, it is good for nothing; and you justly charge the author's style with being loose, vague, flaccid and imbecil. The poet has been said

'To make us heirs
Of truth and pure delight in endless lays.'

Not so the prose-writer, who always mingles clay with his gold, and often separates truth from mere pleasure. He can only arrive at the last through the first. In poetry, one pleasing or striking image obviously suggests another: the increasing the sense of beauty or grandeur is the principle of composition: in prose, the professed object is to impart conviction, and nothing can be admitted by way of ornament or relief, that does not add new force or clearness to the original conception. The two classes of ideas brought together by the orator or impassioned prose-writer, to wit, the general subject and the particular image, are so far incompatible, and the identity must be more strict, more marked, more determinate, to make them coalesce to any practical purpose. Every word should be a blow: every thought should instantly grapple with its fellow. There must be a weight, a precision, a conformity from association in the tropes and figures of animated prose to fit them to their place in the argument, and make them *tell*, which may be dispensed with in poetry, where there is something much more congenial between the subject-matter and the illustration—

'Like beauty making beautiful old rime!'

What can be more remote, for instance, and at the same time more apposite, more *the same*, than the following comparison of the English Constitution to 'the proud Keep of Windsor,' in the celebrated Letter to a Noble Lord?

'Such are *their* ideas; such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our church and state, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power—a fortress

at once and a temple[1]—shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion; as long as the British Monarchy—not more limited than fenced by the orders of the State—shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers; as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land, so long the mounds and dykes of the low, fat, Bedford level will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levellers of France. As long as our Sovereign Lord the King, and his faithful subjects, the Lords and Commons of this realm—the triple cord which no man can break; the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge of this nation; the firm guarantees of each other's being, and each other's rights; the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind and every quality of property and of dignity—As long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe: and we are all safe together—the high from the blights of envy and the spoliations of rapacity; the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen! and so be it: and so it will be,

> "*Dum domus Æneæ Capitoli immobile saxum*
> *Accolet; imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.*"'

Nothing can well be more impracticable to a simile than the vague and complicated idea which is here embodied in one; yet how finely, how nobly it stands out, in natural grandeur, in royal state, with double barriers round it to answer for its identity, with 'buttress, frieze, and coigne of 'vantage' for the imagination to 'make its pendant bed and procreant cradle,' till the idea is confounded with the object representing it—the wonder of a kingdom; and then how striking, how determined the descent, 'at one fell swoop,' to the 'low, fat, Bedford level!' Poetry would have been bound to maintain a certain decorum, a regular balance between these two ideas; sterling prose throws aside all such idle respect to appearances, and with its pen, like a sword, 'sharp and sweet,' lays open the naked truth! The poet's Muse is like a mistress, whom we keep only while she is young and beautiful, *durante bene placito*; the Muse of prose is like a wife, whom we take during life, *for better for worse*. Burke's execution, like that of all good prose, savours of the texture of what he describes, and his pen slides or drags over the ground of his subject, like the painter's pencil. The most rigid fidelity and the most fanciful extravagance meet, and are reconciled in his pages. I never pass Windsor but I think of this passage in Burke, and hardly know to

[1] '*Templum in modum arcis.*'
TACITUS of the Temple of Jerusalem.

which I am indebted most for enriching my moral sense, that or the fine picturesque stanza, in Gray,

'From Windsor's heights the expanse below
Of mead, of lawn, of wood survey,' &c.

I might mention that the so much admired description in one of the India speeches, of Hyder Ally's army (I think it is) which 'now hung like a cloud upon the mountain, and now burst upon the plain like a thunder bolt,' would do equally well for poetry or prose. It is a bold and striking illustration of a naturally impressive object. This is not the case with the Abbe Sieyes's far-famed 'pigeon-holes,' nor with the comparison of the Duke of Bedford to 'the Leviathan, tumbling about his unwieldy bulk in the ocean of royal bounty.' Nothing here saves the description but the force of the invective; the startling truth, the vehemence, the remoteness, the aptitude, the perfect peculiarity and coincidence of the allusion. No writer would ever have thought of it but himself; no reader can ever forget it. What is there in common, one might say, between a Peer of the Realm, and 'that sea-beast,' of those

'Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream?'

Yet Burke has knit the two ideas together, and no man can put them asunder. No matter how slight and precarious the connection, the length of line it is necessary for the fancy to give out in keeping hold of the object on which it has fastened, he seems to have 'put his hook in the nostrils' of this enormous creature of the crown, that empurples all its track through the glittering expanse of a profound and restless imagination!

In looking into the Iris of last week, I find the following passages, in an article on the death of Lord Castlereagh.

'The splendour of Majesty leaving the British metropolis, careering along the ocean, and landing in the capital of the North, is distinguished only by glimpses through the dense array of clouds in which Death hid himself, while he struck down to the dust the stateliest courtier near the throne, and the broken train of which pursues and crosses the Royal progress wherever its glories are presented to the eye of imagination. . . . . .

'The same indefatigable mind—a mind of all work—which thus ruled the Continent with a rod of iron, the sword—within the walls of the House of Commons ruled a more distracted region with a more subtle and finely-tempered weapon, the tongue; and truly, if this *was* the only weapon his Lordship wielded there, where he had daily to encounter, and frequently almost alone, enemies more formidable than

Buonaparte, it must be acknowledged that he achieved greater victories than Demosthenes or Cicero ever gained in far more easy fields of strife; nay, he wrought miracles of speech, outvying those miracles of song, which Orpheus is said to have performed, when not only men and brutes, but rocks, woods, and mountains, followed the sound of his voice and lyre. . . . . .

'But there was a worm at the root of the gourd that flourished over his head in the brightest sunshine of a court; both perished in a night, and in the morning, that which had been his glory and his shadow, covered him like a shroud; while the corpse, notwithstanding all his honours, and titles, and offices, lay unmoved in the place where it fell, till a judgment had been passed upon him, which the poorest peasant escapes when he dies in the ordinary course of nature.'

SHEFFIELD ADVERTISER, Aug. 20, 1822.

This, it must be confessed, is very unlike Burke: yet Mr. Montgomery is a very pleasing poet, and a strenuous politician. The whole is *travelling out of the record*, and to no sort of purpose. The author is constantly getting away from the impression of his subject, to envelop himself in a cloud of images, which weaken and perplex, instead of adding force and clearness to it. Provided he is figurative, he does not care how commonplace or irrelevant the figures are, and he wanders on, delighted in a labyrinth of words, like a truant schoolboy, who is only glad to have escaped from his task. He has a very slight hold of his subject, and is tempted to let it go for any fallacious ornament of style. How obscure and circuitous is the allusion to 'the clouds in which Death hid himself, to strike down the stateliest courtier near the throne!' How hackneyed is the reference to Demosthenes and Cicero, and how utterly quaint and unmeaning is the ringing the changes upon Orpheus and his train of men, beasts, woods, rocks, and mountains in connection with Lord Castlereagh! But he is better pleased with this classical fable than with the death of the Noble Peer, and delights to dwell upon it, to however little use. So he is glad to take advantage of the scriptural idea of a gourd; not to enforce, but as a relief to his reflections; and points his conclusion with a puling sort of common-place, that a peasant, who dies a natural death, has no Coroner's Inquest to sit upon him. All these are the faults of the ordinary poetical style. Poets think they are bound, by the tenour of their indentures to the Muses, to 'elevate and surprise' in every line; and not having the usual resources at hand in common or abstracted subjects, aspire to the end without the means. They make, or pretend, an extraordinary interest where there is none. They are ambitious, vain, and indolent—more busy in preparing idle

ornaments, which they take their chance of bringing in somehow or other, than intent on eliciting truths by fair and honest inquiry. It should seem as if they considered prose as a sort of waiting-maid to poetry, that could only be expected to wear her mistress's cast-off finery. Poets have been said to succeed best in fiction; and the account here given may in part explain the reason. That is to say, they must choose their own subject, in such a manner as to afford them continual opportunities of appealing to the senses and exciting the fancy. Dry details, abstruse speculations, do not give scope to vividness of description; and, as they cannot bear to be considered dull, they become too often affected, extravagant, and insipid.

I am indebted to Mr. Coleridge for the comparison of poetic prose to the second-hand finery of a lady's maid (just made use of). He himself is an instance of his own observation, and (what is even worse) of the opposite fault—an affectation of quaintness and originality. With bits of tarnished lace and worthless frippery, he assumes a sweeping oriental costume, or borrows the stiff dresses of our ancestors, or starts an eccentric fashion of his own. He is swelling and turgid—everlastingly aiming to be greater than his subject; filling his fancy with fumes and vapours in the pangs and throes of miraculous parturition, and bringing forth only *still births*. He has an incessant craving, as it were, to exalt every idea into a metaphor, to expand every sentiment into a lengthened mystery, voluminous and vast, confused and cloudy. His style is not succinct, but incumbered with a train of words and images that have no practical, and only a possible relation to one another—that add to its stateliness, but impede its march. One of his sentences winds its 'forlorn way obscure' over the page like a partriarchal procession with camels laden, wreathed turbans, household wealth, the whole riches of the author's mind poured out upon the barren waste of his subject. The palm-tree spreads its sterile branches overhead, and the land of promise is seen in the distance. All this is owing to his wishing to overdo every thing—to make something more out of everything than it is, or than it is worth. The simple truth does not satisfy him—no direct proposition fills up the moulds of his understanding. All is foreign, far-fetched, irrelevant, laboured, unproductive. To read one of his disquisitions is like hearing the variations to a piece of music without the score. Or, to vary the simile, he is not like a man going a journey by the stage-coach along the high-road, but is always getting into a balloon, and mounting into the air, above the plain ground of prose. Whether he soars to the empyrean, or dives to the centre (as he sometimes does), it is equally to get away from the question before him, and to prove that he owes every thing to his own mind. His

object is to invent; he scorns to imitate. The business of prose is the contrary. But Mr. Coleridge is a poet, and his thoughts are free.

I think the poet-laureat is a much better prose-writer. His style has an antique quaintness, with a modern familiarity. He has just a sufficient sprinkling of *archaisms*, of allusions to old Fuller, and Burton, and Latimer, to set off or qualify the smart flippant tone of his apologies for existing abuses, or the ready, galling virulence of his personal invectives. Mr. Southey is a faithful historian, and no inefficient partisan. In the former character, his mind is tenacious of facts; and in the latter, his spleen and jealousy prevent the 'extravagant and erring spirit' of the poet from losing itself in Fancy's endless maze. He 'stoops to *earth*,' at least, and prostitutes his pen to some purpose (not at the same time losing his own soul, and gaining nothing by it) —and he vilifies Reform, and praises the reign of George III. in good set terms, in a straightforward, intelligible, practical, pointed way. He is not buoyed up by conscious power out of the reach of common apprehensions, but makes the most of the obvious advantages he possesses. You may complain of a pettiness and petulance of manner, but certainly there is no want of spirit or facility of execution. He does not waste powder and shot in the air, but loads his piece, takes a level aim, and hits his mark. One would say (though his Muse is ambidexter) that he wrote prose with his right hand; there is nothing awkward, circuitous, or feeble in it. 'The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo:' but this would not apply to him. His prose-lucubrations are pleasanter reading than his poetry. Indeed, he is equally practised and voluminous in both; and it is no improbable conjecture, that Mr. Southey may have had some idea of rivalling the reputation of Voltaire in the extent, the spirit, and the versatility of his productions in prose and verse, except that he has written no tragedies but Wat Tyler!

To my taste, the Author of Rimini, and Editor of the Examiner, is among the best and least corrupted of our poetical prose-writers. In his light but well supported columns we find the raciness, the sharpness, and sparkling effect of poetry, with little that is extravagant or far-fetched, and no turgidity or pompous pretension. Perhaps there is too much the appearance of relaxation and trifling (as if he had escaped the shackles of rhyme), a caprice, a levity, and a disposition to innovate in words and ideas. Still the genuine master-spirit of the prose-writer is there; the tone of lively, sensible conversation; and this may in part arise from the author's being himself an animated talker. Mr. Hunt wants something of the heat and earnestness of the political partisan; but his familiar and miscellaneous papers have

all the ease, grace, and point of the best style of Essay-writing. Many of his effusions in the INDICATOR show, that if he had devoted himself exclusively to that mode of writing, he inherits more of the spirit of Steele than any man since his time.

Lord Byron's prose is bad; that is to say, heavy, laboured, and coarse: he tries to knock some one down with the butt-end of every line, which defeats his object—and the style of the Author of Waverley (if he comes fairly into this discussion) as mere style, is villainous. It is pretty plain he is a poet; for the sound of names runs mechanically in his ears, and he rings the changes unconsciously on the same words in a sentence, like the same rhymes in a couplet.

Not to spin out this discussion too much, I would conclude by observing, that some of the old English prose-writers (who were not poets) are the best, and, at the same time, the most *poetical* in the favourable sense. Among these we may reckon some of the old divines, and Jeremy Taylor at the head of them. There is a flush like the dawn over his writings; the sweetness of the rose, the freshness of the morning-dew. There is a softness in his style, proceeding from the tenderness of his heart: but his head is firm, and his hand is free. His materials are as finely wrought up as they are original and attractive in themselves. Milton's prose-style savours too much of poetry, and, as I have already hinted, of an imitation of the Latin. Dryden's is perfectly unexceptionable, and a model, in simplicity, strength, and perspicuity, for the subjects he treated of.

ESSAY II

ON DREAMS

DR. SPURZHEIM, in treating of the *Physiology of the Brain*, has the following curious passage:

'The state of somnambulism equally proves the plurality of the organs. This is a state of incomplete sleep, wherein several organs are watching. It is known that the brain acts upon the external world by means of voluntary motion, of the voice, and of the five external senses. Now, if in sleeping some organs be active, dreams take place; if the action of the brain be propagated to the muscles, there follow motions; if the action of the brain be propagated to the vocal organs, the sleeping person speaks. Indeed, it is known that sleeping persons dream and speak; others dream, speak, hear, and

answer; others still dream, rise, do various things, and walk. This latter state is called somnambulism, that is, the state of walking during sleep. Now, as the ear can hear, so the eyes may see, while the other organs sleep; and there are facts quite positive which prove that several persons in the state of somnambulism have seen, but always with open eyes. There are also convulsive fits, in which the patients see without hearing, and *vice versâ*. Some somnambulists do things of which they are not capable in a state of watching; and dreaming persons reason sometimes better than they do when awake. This phenomenon is not astonishing,' &c.—PHYSIOGNOMICAL SYSTEM OF DRS. GALL AND SPURZHEIM, p. 217.

There is here a very singular mixing up of the flattest truisms with the most gratuitous assumptions; so that the one being told with great gravity, and the other delivered with the most familiar air, one is puzzled in a cursory perusal to distinguish which is which. This is an art of stultifying the reader, like that of the juggler, who shows you some plain matter-of-fact experiment just as he is going to play off his capital trick. The mind is, by this alternation of style, thrown off its guard; and between wondering first at the absurdity, and then at the superficiality of the work, becomes almost a convert to it. A thing exceedingly questionable is stated so roundly, you think there must be something in it: the plainest proposition is put in so doubtful and cautious a manner, you conceive the writer must see a great deal farther into the subject than you do. You mistrust your ears and eyes, and are in a fair way to resign the use of your understanding. It is a fine style of *mystifying*. Again, it is the practice with the German school, and in particular with Dr. Spurzheim, to run counter to common sense and the best authenticated opinions. They must always be more knowing than every body else, and treat the wisdom of the ancients, and the wisdom of the moderns, much in the same supercilious way. It has been taken for granted generally that people see with their eyes; and therefore it is stated in the above passage as a discovery of the author, 'imparted in dreadful secresy,' that sleep-walkers always see with their eyes open. The meaning of which is, that we are not to give too implicit or unqualified an assent to the principle, at which modern philosophers have arrived with some pains and difficulty, that we acquire our ideas of external objects through the senses. The *transcendental* sophists wish to back out of that, as too conclusive and well-defined a position. They would be glad to throw the whole of what has been done on this question into confusion again, in order to begin *de novo*, like children who construct houses with cards, and when the pack is built up, shuffle them all together on the table again. These intellectual Sysiphuses are always

rolling the stone of knowledge up a hill, for the perverse pleasure of rolling it down again. Having gone as far as they can in the direction of reason and good sense, rather than seem passive or the slaves of any opinion, they turn back with a wonderful look of sagacity to all sorts of exploded prejudices and absurdity. It is a pity that we cannot *let well done alone*, and that after labouring for centuries to remove ignorance, we set our faces with the most wilful officiousness against the stability of knowledge. The *Physiognomical System* of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim is full of this sort of disgusting cant. We are still only to *believe in all unbelief*—in what they tell us. The less credulous we are of other things, the more faith we shall have in reserve for them: by exhausting our stock of scepticism and caution on such obvious matters of fact as that people always see with their eyes open, we shall be prepared to swallow their crude and extravagant theories whole, and not be astonished at 'the phenomenon, that persons sometimes reason better asleep than awake!'

I have alluded to this passage because I myself am (or used some time ago to be) a sleep-walker; and know how the thing is. In this sort of disturbed, unsound sleep, the eyes are not closed, and are attracted by the light. I used to get up and go towards the window, and make violent efforts to throw it open. The air in some measure revived me, or I might have tried to fling myself out. I saw objects indistinctly, the houses, for instance, facing me on the opposite side of the street; but still it was some time before I could recognise them or recollect where I was: that is, I was still asleep, and the dimness of my senses (as far as it prevailed) was occasioned by the greater numbness of my memory. This phenomenon is not astonishing, unless we chuse in all such cases to put the cart before the horse. For in fact, it is the mind that sleeps, and the senses (so to speak) only follow the example. The mind dozes, and the eye-lids close in consequence: we do not go to sleep, because we shut our eyes. I can, however, speak to the fact of the eyes being open, when their sense is shut; or rather, when we are unable to draw just inferences from it. It is generally in the night-time indeed, or in a strange place, that the circumstance happens; but as soon as the light dawns on the recollection, the obscurity and perplexity of the senses clear up. The external impression is made before, much in the same manner as it is after we are awake; but it does not lead to the usual train of associations connected with that impression; *e.g.* the name of the street or town where we are, who lives at the opposite house, how we came to sleep in the room where we are, &c.; all which are ideas belonging to our waking experience, and are at this time cut off or greatly disturbed by sleep. It is just the same as when persons

recover from a swoon, and fix their eyes unconsciously on those about them, for a considerable time before they recollect where they are. Would any one but a German physiologist think it necessary to assure us that at this time they see, but with their eyes open, or pretend that though they have lost all memory or understanding during their fainting fit, their minds act then more vigorously and freely than ever, because they are not distracted by outward impressions? The appeal is made to the outward sense, in the instances we have seen; but the mind is deaf to it, because its functions are for the time gone. It is ridiculous to pretend with this author, that in sleep some of the organs of the mind rest, while others are active: it might as well be pretended that in sleep one eye watches while the other is shut. The stupor is general: the faculty of thought itself is impaired; and whatever ideas we have, instead of being confined to any particular faculty or the impressions of any one sense, and invigorated thereby, float at random from object to object, from one class of impressions to another, without coherence or control. The *conscious* or connecting link between our ideas, which forms them into separate groups or compares different parts and views of a subject together, seems to be that which is principally wanting in sleep; so that any idea that presents itself in this anarchy of the mind is lord of the ascendant for the moment, and is driven out by the next straggling notion that comes across it. The bundles of thought are, as it were, untied, loosened from a common centre, and drift along the stream of fancy as it happens. Hence the confusion (not the concentration of the faculties) that continually takes place in this state of half-perception. The mind takes in but one thing at a time, but one part of a subject, and therefore cannot correct its sudden and heterogeneous transitions from one momentary impression to another by a larger grasp of understanding. Thus we confound one person with another, merely from some accidental coincidence, the name or the place where we have seen them, or their having been concerned with us in some particular transaction the evening before. They lose and regain their proper identity perhaps half a dozen times in this rambling way; nor are we able (though we are somewhat incredulous and surprised at these compound creations) to detect the error, from not being prepared to trace the same connected subject of thought to a number of varying and successive ramifications, or to form the idea of a *whole*. We think that Mr. Such-a-one did so and so: then, from a second face coming across us, like the sliders of a magic lantern, it was not he, but another; then some one calls him by his right name, and he is himself again. We are little shocked at these gross contradictions; for if the mind was capable of perceiving them in all their absurdity,

it would not be liable to fall into them. It runs into them for the same reason that it is hardly conscious of them when made.

> '——That which was now a horse, a bear, a cloud,
> Even with a thought the rack dislimns,
> And makes it indistinct as water is in water.'

The difference, so far then, between sleeping and waking seems to be that in the latter we have a greater range of conscious recollections, a larger discourse of reason, and associate ideas in longer trains and more as they are connected one with another in the order of nature; whereas in the former, any two impressions, that meet or are alike, join company, and then are parted again, without notice, like the froth from the wave. So in madness, there is, I should apprehend, the same tyranny of the imagination over the judgment; that is, the mind has slipped its cable, and single images meet, and jostle, and unite suddenly together, without any power to arrange or compare them with others, with which they are connected in the world of reality. There is a continual phantasmagoria: whatever shapes and colours come together are by the heat and violence of the brain referred to external nature, without regard to the order of time, place, or circumstance. From the same want of continuity, we often forget our dreams so speedily: if we cannot catch them as they are passing out at the door, we never set eyes on them again. There is no clue or thread of imagination to trace them by. In a morning sometimes we have had a dream that we try in vain to recollect; it is gone, like the rainbow from the cloud. At other times (so evanescent is their texture) we forget that we have dreamt at all; and at these times the mind seems to have been a mere blank, and sleep presents only an image of death. Hence has arisen the famous dispute, *Whether the soul thinks always?*—on which Mr. Locke and different writers have bestowed so much tedious and unprofitable discussion; some maintaining that the mind was like a watch that goes continually, though more slowly and irregularly at one time than another; while the opposite party contended that it often stopped altogether, bringing the example of sound sleep as an argument, and desiring to know what proof we could have of thoughts passing through the mind, of which it was itself perfectly unconscious, and retained not the slightest recollection. I grant, we often sleep so sound, or have such faint imagery passing through the brain, that if we awake by degrees, we forget it altogether: we recollect our first waking, and perhaps some imperfect suggestions of fancy just before; but beyond this, all is mere oblivion. But I have observed that whenever I have been waked up suddenly, and not left to myself to recover from this state

of mental torpor, I have been always dreaming of something, *i.e.* thinking, according to the tenor of the question. Let any one call you at any time, however fast asleep you may be, you make out their voice in the first surprise to be like some one's you were thinking of in your sleep. Let an accidental noise, the falling of something in the next room, rouse you up, you constantly find something to associate it with, or translate it back into the language of your slumbering thoughts. You are never taken completely at a *nonplus* —summoned, as it were, out of a state of nonexistence. It is easy for any one to try the experiment upon himself; that is, to examine every time he is waked up suddenly, so that his waking and sleeping state are brought into immediate contact, whether he has not in all such cases been dreaming of something, and not fairly *caught napping*. For myself, I think I can speak with certainty. It would indeed be rather odd to awake out of such an absolute privation and suspense of thought as is contended for by the partisans of the contrary theory. It would be a peep into the grave, a consciousness of death, an escape from the world of non-entity!

The vividness of our impressions in dreams, of which so much has been said, seems to be rather apparent than real; or, if this mode of expression should be objected to as unwarrantable, rather physical than mental. It is a vapour, a fume, the effect of the 'heat-oppressed brain.' The imagination gloats over an idea, and doats at the same time. However warm or brilliant the colouring of these changing appearances, they vanish with the dawn. They are put out by our waking thoughts, as the sun puts out a candle. It is unlucky that we sometimes remember the heroic sentiments, the profound discoveries, the witty repartees we have uttered in our sleep. The one turn to bombast, the others are mere truisms, and the last absolute nonsense. Yet we clothe them certainly with a fancied importance at the moment. This seems to be merely the effervescence of the blood or of the brain, physically acting. It is an odd thing in sleep, that we not only fancy we see different persons, and talk to them, but that we hear them make answers, and startle us with an observation or a piece of news; and though we of course put the answer into their mouths, we have no idea beforehand what it will be, and it takes us as much by surprise as it would in reality. This kind of successful ventriloquism which we practise upon ourselves may perhaps be in some measure accounted for from the short-sightedness and incomplete consciousness which were remarked above as the peculiar characteristics of sleep.

The power of prophesying or foreseeing things in our sleep, as from a higher and more abstracted sphere of thought, need not be

here argued upon. There is, however, a sort of profundity in sleep; and it may be usefully consulted as an oracle in this way. It may be said, that the voluntary power is suspended, and things come upon us as unexpected revelations, which we keep out of our thoughts at other times. We may be aware of a danger, that yet we do not chuse, while we have the full command of our faculties, to acknowledge to ourselves: the impending event will then appear to us as a dream, and we shall most likely find it verified afterwards. Another thing of no small consequence is, that we may sometimes discover our tacit, and almost unconscious sentiments, with respect to persons or things in the same way. We are not hypocrites in our sleep. The curb is taken off from our passions, and our imagination wanders at will. When awake, we check these rising thoughts, and fancy we have them not. In dreams, when we are off our guard, they return securely and unbidden. We may make this use of the infirmity of our sleeping metamorphosis, that we may repress any feelings of this sort that we disapprove in their incipient state, and detect, ere it be too late, an unwarrantable antipathy or fatal passion. Infants cannot disguise their thoughts from others; and in sleep we reveal the secret to ourselves.

It should appear that I have never been in love, for the same reason. I never dream of the face of any one I am particularly attached to. I have thought almost to agony of the same person for years, nearly without ceasing, so as to have her face always before me, and to be haunted by a perpetual consciousness of disappointed passion, and yet I never in all that time dreamt of this person more than once or twice, and then not vividly. I conceive, therefore, that this perseverance of the imagination in a fruitless track must have been owing to mortified pride, to an intense desire and hope of good in the abstract, more than to love, which I consider as an individual and involuntary passion, and which therefore, when it is strong, must predominate over the fancy in sleep. I think myself into love, and dream myself out of it. I should have made a very bad Endymion, in this sense; for all the time the heavenly Goddess was shining over my head, I should never have had a thought about her. If I had waked and found her gone, I might have been in a considerable *taking*. Coleridge used to laugh at me for my want of the faculty of dreaming; and once, on my saying that I did not like the preternatural stories in the Arabian Nights (for the comic parts I love dearly), he said, 'That must be because you never dream. There is a class of poetry built on this foundation, which is surely no inconsiderable part of our nature, since we are asleep and building up imaginations of this sort half our time.' I had nothing to say against

it: it was one of his conjectural subtleties, in which he excels all the persons I ever knew; but I had some satisfaction in finding afterwards, that I had Bishop Atterbury expressly on my side in this question, who has recorded his detestation of SINBAD THE SAILOR, in an interesting letter to Pope. Perhaps he too did not dream!

Yet I dream sometimes; I dream of the Louvre—*Intus et in cute.* I dreamt I was there a few weeks ago, and that the old scene returned—that I looked for my favourite pictures, and found them gone or erased. The dream of my youth came upon me; a glory and a vision unutterable, that comes no more but in darkness and in sleep: my heart rose up, and I fell on my knees, and lifted up my voice and wept, and I awoke. I also dreamt a little while ago, that I was reading the New Eloise to an old friend, and came to the concluding passage in Julia's farewell letter, which had much the same effect upon me.—The words are, '*Trop heureuse d'acheter au prix de ma vie le droit de t'aimer toujours sans crime et de te le dire encore une fois, avant que je meurs!*' I used to sob over this passage twenty years ago; and in this dream about it lately, I seemed to live these twenty years over again in one short moment! I do not dream ordinarily; and there are people who never could see anything in the *New Eloise.* Are we not quits!

ESSAY III

ON THE CONVERSATION OF AUTHORS

AN author is bound to write—well or ill, wisely or foolishly: it is his trade. But I do not see that he is bound to talk, any more than he is bound to dance, or ride, or fence better than other people. Reading, study, silence, thought, are a bad introduction to loquacity. It would be sooner learnt of chambermaids and tapsters. He understands the art and mystery of his own profession, which is book-making: what right has any one to expect or require him to do more—to make a bow gracefully on entering or leaving a room, to make love charmingly, or to make a fortune at all? In all things there is a division of labour. A lord is no less amorous for writing ridiculous love-letters, nor a General less successful for wanting wit and honesty. Why then may not a poor author say nothing, and yet pass muster? Set him on the top of a stage-coach, he will make no figure; he is *mum-chance*, while the slang-wit flies about as fast as the

dust, with the crack of the whip and the clatter of the horses' heels: put him in a ring of boxers, he is a poor creature—

'And of his port as meek as is a maid.'

Introduce him to a tea-party of milliner's girls, and they are ready to split their sides with laughing at him: over his bottle, he is dry: in the drawing-room, rude or awkward: he is too refined for the vulgar, too clownish for the fashionable:—'he is one that cannot make a good leg, one that cannot eat a mess of broth cleanly, one that cannot ride a horse without spur-galling, one that cannot salute a woman, and look on her directly:'—in courts, in camps, in town and country, he is a cypher or a butt: he is good for nothing but a laughing-stock or a scare-crow. You can scarcely get a word out of him for love or money. He knows nothing. He has no notion of pleasure or business, or of what is going on in the world; he does not understand cookery (unless he is a doctor in divinity) nor surgery, nor chemistry (unless he is a *Quidnunc*) nor mechanics, nor husbandry and tillage (unless he is as great an admirer of Tull's Husbandry, and has profited as much by it as the philosopher of Botley)—no, nor music, painting, the Drama, nor the Fine Arts in general.

'What the deuce is it then, my good sir, that he does understand, or know anything about?'

'BOOKS, VENUS, BOOKS!'

'What books?'

'Not receipt-books, Madona, nor account-books, nor books of pharmacy, or the veterinary art (they belong to their respective callings and handicrafts) but books of liberal taste and general knowledge.'

'What do you mean by that general knowledge which implies not a knowledge of things in general, but an ignorance (by your own account) of every one in particular: or by that liberal taste which scorns the pursuits and acquirements of the rest of the world in succession, and is confined exclusively, and by way of excellence, to what nobody takes an interest in but yourself, and a few idlers like yourself? Is this what the critics mean by the *belles-lettres*, and the study of humanity?'

Book-knowledge, in a word, then, is knowledge *communicable by books*: and it is general and liberal for this reason, that it is intelligible and interesting on the bare suggestion. That to which any one feels a romantic attachment, merely from finding it in a book, must be interesting in itself: that which he instantly forms a lively and entire conception of, from seeing a few marks and scratches upon paper, must be taken from common nature: that which, the first time you

meet with it, seizes upon the attention as a curious speculation, must exercise the general faculties of the human mind. There are certain broader aspects of society and views of things common to every subject, and more or less cognizable to every mind; and these the scholar treats and founds his claim to general attention upon them, without being chargeable with pedantry. The minute descriptions of fishing-tackle, of baits and flies in Walton's Complete Angler, make that work a great favourite with sportsmen: the alloy of an amiable humanity, and the modest but touching descriptions of familiar incidents and rural objects scattered through it, have made it an equal favourite with every reader of taste and feeling. Montaigne's Essays, Dilworth's Spelling Book, and Fearn's Treatise on Contingent Remainders, are all equally books, but not equally adapted for all classes of readers. The two last are of no use but to school-masters and lawyers: but the first is a work we may recommend to any one to read who has ever thought at all, or who would learn to think justly on any subject. Persons of different trades and professions—the mechanic, the shopkeeper, the medical practitioner, the artist, &c. may all have great knowledge and ingenuity in their several vocations, the details of which will be very edifying to themselves, and just as incomprehensible to their neighbours: but over and above this professional and technical knowledge, they must be supposed to have a stock of common sense and common feeling to furnish subjects for common conversation, or to give them any pleasure in each other's company. It is to this common stock of ideas, spread over the surface, or striking its roots into the very centre of society, that the popular writer appeals, and not in vain; for he finds readers. It is of this finer essence of wisdom and humanity, 'etherial mould, sky-tinctured,' that books of the better sort are made. They contain the language of thought. It must happen that, in the course of time and the variety of human capacity, some persons will have struck out finer observations, reflections, and sentiments than others. These they have committed to books of memory, have bequeathed as a lasting legacy to posterity; and such persons have become standard authors. We visit at the shrine, drink in some measure of the inspiration, and cannot easily 'breathe in other air less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits.' Are we to be blamed for this, because the vulgar and illiterate do not always understand us? The fault is rather in them, who are 'confined and cabin'd in,' each in their own particular sphere and compartment of ideas, and have not the same refined medium of communication or abstracted topics of discourse. Bring a number of literary, or of illiterate persons together, perfect strangers to each other, and see which party will make the best company. 'Verily,

we have our reward.' We have made our election, and have no reason to repent it, if we were wise. But the misfortune is, we wish to have all the advantages on one side. We grudge, and cannot reconcile it to ourselves, that any one 'should go about to cozen fortune, without the stamp of learning!' We think 'because we are *scholars*, there shall be no more cakes and ale!' We don't know how to account for it, that bar-maids should gossip, or ladies whisper, or bullies roar, or fools laugh, or knaves thrive, without having gone through the same course of select study that we have! This vanity is preposterous, and carries its own punishment with it. Books are a world in themselves, it is true; but they are not the only world. The world itself is a volume larger than all the libraries in it. Learning is a sacred deposit from the experience of ages; but it has not put all future experience on the shelf, or debarred the common herd of mankind from the use of their hands, tongues, eyes, ears, or understandings. Taste is a luxury for the privileged few: but it would be hard upon those who have not the same standard of refinement in their own minds that we suppose ourselves to have, if this should prevent them from having recourse, as usual, to their old frolics, coarse jokes, and horse-play, and getting through the wear and tear of the world, with such homely sayings and shrewd helps as they may. Happy is it, that the mass of mankind eat and drink, and sleep, and perform their several tasks, and do as they like without us—caring nothing for our scribblings, our carpings, and our quibbles; and moving on the same, in spite of our fine-spun distinctions, fantastic theories, and lines of demarcation, which are like the chalk-figures drawn on ball-room floors to be danced out before morning! In the field opposite the window where I write this, there is a country-girl picking stones: in the one next it, there are several poor women weeding the blue and red flowers from the corn: farther on, are two boys, tending a flock of sheep. What do they know or care about what I am writing about them, or ever will—or what would they be the better for it, if they did? Or why need we despise

> 'The wretched slave,
> Who like a lackey, from the rise to the set,
> Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night
> Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn,
> Doth rise, and help Hyperion to his horse;
> And follows so the ever-running year
> With profitable labour to his grave?'

Is not this life as sweet as writing Ephemerides? But we put that which flutters the brain idly for a moment, and then is heard no

more, in competition with nature, which exists every where, and lasts always. We not only underrate the force of nature, and make too much of art—but we also over-rate our own accomplishments and advantages derived from art. In the presence of clownish ignorance, or of persons without any great pretensions, real or affected, we are very much inclined to take upon ourselves, as the virtual representatives of science, art, and literature. We have a strong itch to show off and do the honours of civilization for all the great men whose works we have ever read, and whose names our auditors have never heard of, as noblemen's lacqueys, in the absence of their masters, give themselves airs of superiority over every one else. But though we have read Congreve, a stage-coachman may be an over-match for us in wit: though we are deep-versed in the excellence of Shakspeare's colloquial style, a village beldam may outscold us: thongh we have read Machiavel in the original Italian, we may be easily outwitted by a clown: and though we have cried our eyes out over the New Eloise, a poor shepherd-lad, who hardly knows how to spell his own name, may 'tell his tale, under the hawthorn in the dale,' and prove a more thriving wooer. What then is the advantage we possess over the meanest of the mean? Why this, that we have read Congreve, Shakspeare, Machiavel, the New Eloise;—not that we are to have their wit, genius, shrewdness, or melting tenderness.

From speculative pursuits we must be satisfied with speculative benefits. From reading, too, we learn to write. If we have had the pleasure of studying the highest models of perfection in their kind, and can hope to leave any thing ourselves, however slight, to be looked upon as a model, or even a good copy in its way, we may think ourselves pretty well off, without engrossing all the privileges of learning, and all the blessings of ignorance into the bargain.

It has been made a question whether there have not been individuals in common life of greater talents and powers of mind than the most celebrated writers—whether, for instance, such or such a Liverpool merchant, or Manchester manufacturer, was not a more sensible man than Montaigne, of a longer reach of understanding than the Viscount of St. Albans. There is no saying, unless some of these illustrious obscure had communicated their important discoveries to the world. But then they would have been authors! —On the other hand, there is a set of critics who fall into the contrary error; and suppose that unless the proof of capacity is laid before all the world, the capacity itself cannot exist; looking upon all those who have not commenced authors, as literally 'stocks and stones, and worse than senseless things.' I remember trying to

convince a person of this class, that a young lady, whom he knew something of, the niece of a celebrated authoress, had just the same sort of fine *tact* and ironical turn in conversation, that her relative had shown in her writings when young. The only answer I could get was an incredulous smile, and the observation that when she wrote any thing as good as ——, or ——, he might think her as clever. I said all I meant was, that she had the same family talents, and asked whether he thought that if Miss —— had not been very clever, as a mere girl, before she wrote her novels, she would ever have written them? It was all in vain. He still stuck to his text, and was convinced that the niece was a little fool compared to her aunt at the same age; and if he had known the aunt formerly, he would have had just the same opinion of *her*. My friend was one of those who have a settled persuasion that it is the book that makes the author, and not the author the book. That's a strange opinion for a great philosopher to hold. But he wilfully shuts his eyes to the germs and indistinct workings of genius, and treats them with supercilious indifference, till they stare him in the face through the press; and then takes cognizance only of the overt acts and published evidence. This is neither a proof of wisdom, nor the way to be wise. It is partly pedantry and prejudice, and partly feebleness of judgment and want of magnanimity. He dare as little commit himself on the character of books, as of individuals, till they are stamped by the public. If you show him any work for his approbation, he asks, 'Whose is the superscription?'—He judges of genius by its shadow, reputation—of the metal by the coin. He is just the reverse of another person whom I know—for, as G—— never allows a particle of merit to any one till it is acknowledged by the whole world, C—— withholds his tribute of applause from every person, in whom any mortal but himself can descry the least glimpse of understanding. He would be thought to look farther into a millstone than any body else. He would have others see with his eyes, and take their opinions from him on trust, in spite of their senses. The more obscure and defective the indications of merit, the greater his sagacity and candour in being the first to point them out. He looks upon what he nicknames *a man of genius*, but as the breath of his nostrils, and the clay in the potter's hands. If any such inert, unconscious mass, under the fostering care of the modern Prometheus, is kindled into life,—begins to see, speak, and move, so as to attract the notice of other people,—our jealous patroniser of latent worth in that case throws aside, scorns, and hates his own handy-work; and deserts his intellectual offspring from the moment they can go alone and shift for themselves.—But to pass on to our more immediate subject.

The fault of literary conversation in general is its too great tenaciousness. It fastens upon a subject, and will not let it go. It resembles a battle rather than a skirmish, and makes a toil of a pleasure. Perhaps it does this from necessity, from a consciousness of wanting the more familiar graces, the power to sport and trifle, to touch lightly and adorn agreeably, every view or turn of a question *en passant*, as it arises. Those who have a reputation to lose are too ambitious of shining, to please. 'To excel in conversation,' said an ingenious man, 'one must not be always striving to say good things: to say one good thing, one must say many bad, and more indifferent ones.' This desire to shine without the means at hand, often makes men silent:—

'The fear of being silent strikes us dumb.'

A writer who has been accustomed to take a connected view of a difficult question, and to work it out gradually in all its bearings, may be very deficient in that quickness and ease, which men of the world, who are in the habit of hearing a variety of opinions, who pick up an observation on one subject, and another on another, and who care about none any farther than the passing away of an idle hour, usually acquire. An author has studied a particular point—he has read, he has inquired, he has thought a great deal upon it: he is not contented to take it up casually in common with others, to throw out a hint, to propose an objection: he will either remain silent, uneasy, and dissatisfied, or he will begin at the beginning and go through with it to the end. He is for taking the whole responsibility upon himself. He would be thought to understand the subject better than others, or indeed would show that nobody else knows any thing about it. There are always three or four points on which the literary novice at his first outset in life fancies he can enlighten every company, and bear down all opposition: but he is cured of this Quixotic and pugnacious spirit, as he goes more into the world, where he finds that there are other opinions and other pretensions to be adjusted besides his own. When this asperity wears off, and a certain scholastic precocity is mellowed down, the conversation of men of letters becomes both interesting and instructive. Men of the world have no fixed principles, no groundwork of thought: mere scholars have too much an object, a theory always in view, to which they wrest every thing, and not unfrequently, common sense itself. By mixing with society, they rub off their hardness of manner, and impracticable, offensive singularity, while they retain a greater depth and coherence of understanding. There is more to be learnt from them than from their books. This was a remark of Rousseau's, and it is a very true one. In the confidence

and unreserve of private intercourse, they are more at liberty to say what they think, to put the subject in different and opposite points of view, to illustrate it more briefly and pithily by familiar expressions, by an appeal to individual character and personal knowledge—to bring in the limitation, to obviate misconception, to state difficulties on their own side of the argument, and answer them as well as they can. This would hardly agree with the prudery, and somewhat ostentatious claims of authorship. Dr. Johnson's conversation in Boswell's Life is much better than his published works: and the fragments of the opinions of celebrated men, preserved in their letters or in anecdotes of them, are justly sought after as invaluable for the same reason. For instance, what a fund of sense there is in Grimm's Memoirs! We thus get at the essence of what is contained in their more laboured productions, without the affectation or formality.—Argument, again, is the death of conversation, if carried on in a spirit of hostility: but discussion is a pleasant and profitable thing, where you advance and defend your opinions as far as you can, and admit the truth of what is objected against them with equal impartiality; in short, where you do not pretend to set up for an oracle, but freely declare what you really know about any question, or suggest what has struck you as throwing a new light upon it, and let it pass for what it is worth. This tone of conversation was well described by Dr. Johnson, when he said of some party at which he had been present the night before —'We had good talk, sir!' As a general rule, there is no conversation worth any thing but between friends, or those who agree in the same leading views of a subject. Nothing was ever learnt by either side in a dispute. You contradict one another, will not allow a grain of sense in what your adversary advances, are blind to whatever makes against yourself, dare not look the question fairly in the face, so that you cannot avail yourself even of your real advantages, insist most on what you feel to be the weakest points of your argument, and get more and more absurd, dogmatical, and violent every moment. Disputes for victory generally end to the dissatisfaction of all parties; and the one recorded in Gil Blas breaks up just as it ought. I once knew a very ingenious man, than whom, to take him in the way of common chit-chat or fireside gossip, no one could be more entertaining or rational. He would make an apt classical quotation, propose an explanation of a curious passage in Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis, detect a metaphysical error in Locke, would infer the volatility of the French character from the chapter in Sterne where the Count mistakes the feigned name of Yorick for a proof of his being the identical imaginary character in Hamlet (*Et vous êtes Yorick!*)—thus confounding words with things twice over—but let a

difference of opinion be once hitched in, and it was all over with him. His only object from that time was to shut out common sense, and to be proof against conviction. He would argue the most ridiculous point (such as that there were two original languages) for hours together, nay, through the horologe. You would not suppose it was the same person. He was like an obstinate run-away horse, that takes the bit in his mouth, and becomes mischievous and unmanageable. He had made up his mind to one thing, not to admit a single particle of what any one else said for or against him. It was all the difference between a man drunk or sober, sane or mad. It is the same when he once gets the pen in his hand. He has been trying to prove a contradiction in terms for the ten last years of his life, *viz.* that the Bourbons have the same right to the throne of France that the Brunswick family have to the throne of England. Many people think there is a want of honesty or a want of understanding in this. There is neither. But he will persist in an argument to the last pinch; he will yield, in absurdity, to no man!

This litigious humour is bad enough: but there is one character still worse, that of a person who goes into company, not to contradict, but to *talk at* you. This is the greatest nuisance in civilised society. Such a person does not come armed to defend himself at all points, but to unsettle, if he can, and throw a slur on all your favourite opinions. If he has a notion that any one in the room is fond of poetry, he immediately volunteers a contemptuous tirade against the idle jingle of verse. If he suspects you have a delight in pictures, he endeavours, not by fair argument, but by a side-wind, to put you out of conceit with so frivolous an art. If you have a taste for music, he does not think much good is to be done by this tickling of the ears. If you speak in praise of a comedy, he does not see the use of wit: if you say you have been to a tragedy, he shakes his head at this mockery of human misery, and thinks it ought to be prohibited. He tries to find out beforehand whatever it is that you take a particular pride or pleasure in, that he may annoy your self-love in the tenderest point (as if he were probing a wound) and make you dissatisfied with yourself and your pursuits for several days afterwards. A person might as well make a practice of throwing out scandalous aspersions against your dearest friends or nearest relations, by way of ingratiating himself into your favour. Such ill-timed impertinence is 'villainous, and shews a pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.'

The soul of conversation is sympathy.—Authors should converse chiefly with authors, and their talk should be of books. 'When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war.' There is nothing

so pedantic as pretending not to be pedantic. No man can get above his pursuit in life: it is getting above himself, which is impossible. There is a Free-masonry in all things. You can only speak to be understood, but this you cannot be, except by those who are in the secret. Hence an argument has been drawn to supersede the necessity of conversation altogether; for it has been said, that there is no use in talking to people of sense, who know all that you can tell them, nor to fools, who will not be instructed. There is, however, the smallest encouragement to proceed, when you are conscious that the more you really enter into a subject, the farther you will be from the comprehension of your hearers—and that the more proofs you give of any position, the more odd and out-of-the-way they will think your notions. C—— is the only person who can talk to all sorts of people, on all sorts of subjects, without caring a farthing for their understanding one word he says—and *he* talks only for admiration and to be listened to, and accordingly the least interruption puts him out. I firmly believe he would make just the same impression on half his audiences, if he purposely repeated absolute nonsense with the same voice and manner and inexhaustible flow of undulating speech! In general, wit shines only by reflection. You must take your cue from your company—must rise as they rise, and sink as they fall. You must see that your good things, your knowing allusions, are not flung away, like the pearls in the adage. What a check it is to be asked a foolish question; to find that the first principles are not understood! You are thrown on your back immediately, the conversation is stopped like a country-dance by those who do not know the figure. But when a set of adepts, of *illuminati*, get about a question, it is worth while to hear them talk. They may snarl and quarrel over it, like dogs; but they pick it bare to the bone, they masticate it thoroughly.

ESSAY IV

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

This was the case formerly at L——'s—where we used to have many lively skirmishes at their Thursday evening parties. I doubt whether the Small-coal man's musical parties could exceed them. Oh! for the pen of John Buncle to consecrate a *petit souvenir* to their memory!—There was L—— himself, the most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men. He always

made the best pun, and the best remark in the course of the evening. His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half a dozen half sentences as he does. His jests scald like tears: and he probes a question with a play upon words. What a keen, laughing, hair-brained vein of home-felt truth! What choice venom! How often did we cut into the haunch of letters, while we discussed the haunch of mutton on the table! How we skimmed the cream of criticism! How we got into the heart of controversy! How we picked out the marrow of authors! 'And, in our flowing cups, many a good name and true was freshly remembered.' Recollect (most sage and critical reader) that in all this I was but a guest! Need I go over the names? They were but the old everlasting set —Milton and Shakspeare, Pope and Dryden, Steele and Addison, Swift and Gay, Fielding, Smollet, Sterne, Richardson, Hogarth's prints, Claude's landscapes, the Cartoons at Hampton-court, and all those things, that, having once been, must ever be. The Scotch Novels had not then been heard of: so we said nothing about them. In general, we were hard upon the moderns. The author of the Rambler was only tolerated in Boswell's Life of him; and it was as much as any one could do to edge in a word for Junius. L—— could not bear Gil Blas. This was a fault. I remember the greatest triumph I ever had was in persuading him, after some years' difficulty, that Fielding was better than Smollet. On one occasion, he was for making out a list of persons famous in history that one would wish to see again—at the head of whom were Pontius Pilate, Sir Thomas Browne, and Dr. Faustus—but we black-balled most of his list! But with what a gusto would he describe his favourite authors, Donne, or Sir Philip Sidney, and call their most crabbed passages *delicious*! He tried them on his palate as epicures taste olives, and his observations had a smack in them, like a roughness on the tongue. With what discrimination he hinted a defect in what he admired most—as in saying that the display of the sumptuous banquet in Paradise Regained was not in true keeping, as the simplest fare was all that was necessary to tempt the extremity of hunger—and stating that Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost were too much like married people. He has furnished many a text for C—— to preach upon. There was no fuss or cant about him: nor were his sweets or his sours ever diluted with one particle of affectation. I cannot say that the party at L——'s were all of one description. There were honorary members, lay-brothers. Wit and good fellowship was the motto inscribed over the door. When a stranger came in, it was not asked, 'Has he written any thing?'—we were above that pedantry; but

we waited to see what he could do. If he could take a hand at piquet, he was welcome to sit down. If a person liked any thing, if he took snuff heartily, it was sufficient. He would understand, by analogy, the pungency of other things, besides Irish blackguard, or Scotch rappee. A character was good any where, in a room or on paper. But we abhorred insipidity, affectation, and fine gentlemen. There was one of our party who never failed to mark 'two for his Nob' at cribbage, and he was thought no mean person. This was Ned P——, and a better fellow in his way breathes not. There was ——, who asserted some incredible matter of fact as a likely paradox, and settled all controversies by an *ipse dixit*, a *fiat* of his will, hammering out many a hard theory on the anvil of his brain—the Baron Munchausen of politics and practical philosophy:—there was Captain ——, who had you at an advantage by never understanding you:—there was Jem White, the author of Falstaff's Letters, who the other day left this dull world to go in search of more kindred spirits, 'turning like the latter end of a lover's lute:' —there was A——, who sometimes dropped in, the Will Honeycomb of our set—and Mrs. R——, who being of a quiet turn, loved to hear a noisy debate. An utterly uninformed person might have supposed this a scene of vulgar confusion and uproar. While the most critical question was pending, while the most difficult problem in philosophy was solving, P—— cried out, 'That 's game,' and M. B. muttered a quotation over the last remains of a veal-pie at a side-table. Once, and once only, the literary interest overcame the general. For C—— was riding the high German horse, and demonstrating the Categories of the Transcendental philosophy to the author of the Road to Ruin; who insisted on his knowledge of German, and German metaphysics, having read the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the original. 'My dear Mr. Holcroft,' said C——, in a tone of infinitely provoking conciliation, 'you really put me in mind of a sweet pretty German girl, about fifteen, that I met with in the Hartz forest in Germany—and who one day, as I was reading the Limits of the Knowable and the Unknowable, the profoundest of all his works, with great attention, came behind my chair, and leaning over, said, What, *you* read Kant? Why, *I* that am German born, don't understand him!' This was too much to bear, and Holcroft, starting up, called out in no measured tone, 'Mr. C——, you are the most eloquent man I ever met with, and the most troublesome with your eloquence!' P—— held the cribbage-peg that was to mark him game, suspended in his hand; and the whist table was silent for a moment. I saw Holcroft down stairs, and, on coming to the landing-place in Mitre-court, he stopped me to observe, that 'he

thought Mr. C—— a very clever man, with a great command of language, but that he feared he did not always affix very precise ideas to the words he used.' After he was gone, we had our laugh out, and went on with the argument on the nature of Reason, the Imagination, and the Will. I wish I could find a publisher for it: it would make a supplement to the *Biographia Literaria* in a volume and a half octavo.

Those days are over! An event, the name of which I wish never to mention, broke up our party, like a bomb-shell thrown into the room: and now we seldom meet—

'Like angels' visits, short and far between.'

There is no longer the same set of persons, nor of associations. L—— does not live where he did. By shifting his abode, his notions seem less fixed. He does not wear his old snuff-coloured coat and breeches. It looks like an alteration in his style. An author and a wit should have a separate costume, a particular cloth: he should present something positive and singular to the mind, like Mr. Douce of the Museum. Our faith in the religion of letters will not bear to be taken to pieces, and put together again by caprice or accident. L. H—— goes there sometimes. He has a fine vinous spirit about him, and tropical blood in his veins: but he is better at his own table. He has a great flow of pleasantry and delightful animal spirits: but his hits do not tell like L——'s; you cannot repeat them the next day. He requires not only to be appreciated, but to have a select circle of admirers and devotees, to feel himself quite at home. He sits at the head of a party with great gaiety and grace; has an elegant manner and turn of features; is never at a loss—*aliquando sufflaminandus erat*—has continual sportive sallies of wit or fancy; tells a story capitally; mimics an actor, or an acquaintance to admiration; laughs with great glee and good humour at his own or other people's jokes; understands the point of an equivoque, or an observation immediately; has a taste and knowledge of books, of music, of medals; manages an argument adroitly; is genteel and gallant, and has a set of bye-phrases and quaint allusions always at hand to produce a laugh:—if he has a fault, it is that he does not listen so well as he speaks, is impatient of interruption, and is fond of being looked up to, without considering by whom. I believe, however, he has pretty well seen the folly of this. Neither is his ready display of personal accomplishment and variety of resources an advantage to his writings. They sometimes present a desultory and slip-shod appearance, owing to this very circumstance. The same things that tell, perhaps, best, to a private

circle round the fireside, are not always intelligible to the public, nor does he take pains to make them so. He is too confident and secure of his audience. That which may be entertaining enough with the assistance of a certain liveliness of manner, may read very flat on paper, because it is abstracted from all the circumstances that had set it off to advantage. A writer should recollect that he has only to trust to the immediate impression of words, like a musician who sings without the accompaniment of an instrument. There is nothing to help out, or slubber over, the defects of the voice in the one case, nor of the style in the other. The reader may, if he pleases, get a very good idea of L. H——'s conversation from a very agreeable paper he has lately published, called the *Indicator*, than which nothing can be more happily conceived or executed.

The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard. Authors in general are not good listeners. Some of the best talkers are, on this account, the worst company; and some who are very indifferent, but very great talkers, are as bad. It is sometimes wonderful to see how a person, who has been entertaining or tiring a company by the hour together, drops his countenance as if he had been shot, or had been seized with a sudden lock-jaw, the moment any one interposes a single observation. The best converser I know is, however, the best listener. I mean Mr. Northcote, the painter. Painters by their profession are not bound to shine in conversation, and they shine the more. He lends his ear to an observation, as if you had brought him a piece of news, and enters into it with as much avidity and earnestness, as if it interested himself personally. If he repeats an old remark or story, it is with the same freshness and point as for the first time. It always arises out of the occasion, and has the stamp of originality. There is no parroting of himself. His look is a continual, ever-varying history-piece of what passes in his mind. His face is as a book. There need no marks of interjection or interrogation to what he says. His manner is quite picturesque. There is an excess of character and *naiveté* that never tires. His thoughts bubble up and sparkle, like beads on old wine. The fund of anecdote, the collection of curious particulars, is enough to set up any common retailer of jests, that dines out every day; but these are not strung together like a row of galley-slaves, but are always introduced to illustrate some argument or bring out some fine distinction of character. The mixture of spleen adds to the sharpness of the point, like poisoned arrows. Mr. Northcote enlarges with enthusiasm on the old painters, and tells good things of the new. The only thing he ever vexed me in was his liking the *Catalogue Raisonnée*. I had almost as soon hear him talk of Titian's pictures (which he

does with tears in his eyes, and looking just like them) as see the originals, and I had rather hear him talk of Sir Joshua's than see them. He is the last of that school who knew Goldsmith and Johnson. How finely he describes Pope! His elegance of mind, his figure, his character were not unlike his own. He does not resemble a modern Englishman, but puts one in mind of a Roman Cardinal or Spanish Inquisitor. I never ate or drank with Mr. Northcote; but I have lived on his conversation with undiminished relish ever since I can remember,—and when I leave it, I come out into the street with feelings lighter and more etherial than I have at any other time.—One of his *tête-à-têtes* would at any time make an Essay; but he cannot write himself, because he loses himself in the connecting passages, is fearful of the effect, and wants the habit of bringing his ideas into one focus or point of view. A *lens* is necessary to collect the diverging rays, the refracted and broken angular lights of conversation on paper. Contradiction is half the battle in talking —the being startled by what others say, and having to answer on the spot. You have to defend yourself, paragraph by paragraph, parenthesis within parenthesis. Perhaps it might be supposed that a person who excels in conversation and cannot write, would succeed better in dialogue. But the stimulus, the immediate irritation would be wanting; and the work would read flatter than ever, from not having the very thing it pretended to have.

Lively sallies and connected discourse are very different things. There are many persons of that impatient and restless turn of mind, that they cannot wait a moment for a conclusion, or follow up the thread of any argument. In the hurry of conversation their ideas are somehow huddled into sense; but in the intervals of thought, leave a great gap between. Montesquieu said, he often lost an idea before he could find words for it: yet he dictated, by way of saving time, to an amanuensis. This last is, in my opinion, a vile method, and a solecism in authorship. Horne Tooke, among other paradoxes, used to maintain, that no one could write a good style who was not in the habit of talking and hearing the sound of his own voice. He might as well have said that no one could relish a good style without reading it aloud, as we find common people do to assist their apprehension. But there is a method of trying periods on the ear, or weighing them with the scales of the breath, without any articulate sound. Authors, as they write, may be said to 'hear a sound so fine, there's nothing lives 'twixt it and silence.' Even musicians generally compose in their heads. I agree that no style is good, that is not fit to be spoken or read aloud with effect. This holds true not only of emphasis and cadence, but also with regard to natural idiom and colloquial freedom.

Sterne's was in this respect the best style that ever was written. You fancy that you hear the people talking. For a contrary reason, no college-man writes a good style, or understands it when written. Fine writing is with him all verbiage and monotony—a translation into classical centos or hexameter lines.

That which I have just mentioned is among many instances I could give of ingenious absurdities advanced by Mr. Tooke in the heat and pride of controversy. A person who knew him well, and greatly admired his talents, said of him that he never (to his recollection) heard him defend an opinion which he thought right, or in which he believed him to be himself sincere. He indeed provoked his antagonists into the toils by the very extravagance of his assertions, and the teasing sophistry by which he rendered them plausible. His temper was prompter to his skill. He had the manners of a man of the world, with great scholastic resources. He flung every one else off his guard, and was himself immoveable. I never knew any one who did not admit his superiority in this kind of warfare. He put a full stop to one of C——'s long-winded prefatory apologies for his youth and inexperience, by saying abruptly, 'Speak up, young man!' and, at another time, silenced a learned professor, by desiring an explanation of a word which the other frequently used, and which, he said, he had been many years trying to get at the meaning of,—the copulative Is! He was the best intellectual fencer of his day. He made strange havoc of Fuseli's fantastic hieroglyphics, violent humours, and oddity of dialect.—Curran, who was sometimes of the same party, was lively and animated in convivial conversation, but dull in argument; nay, averse to any thing like reasoning or serious observation, and had the worst taste I ever knew. His favourite critical topics were to abuse Milton's Paradise Lost, and Romeo and Juliet. Indeed, he confessed a want of sufficient acquaintance with books when he found himself in literary society in London. He and Sheridan once dined at John Kemble's with Mrs. Inchbald and Mary Woolstonecroft, when the discourse almost wholly turned on Love, 'from noon to dewy eve, a summer's day!' What a subject! What speakers, and what hearers! What would I not give to have been there, had I not learned it all from the bright eyes of Amaryllis, and may one day make a *Table-talk* of it!—Peter Pindar was rich in anecdote and grotesque humour, and profound in technical knowledge both of music, poetry, and painting, but he was gross and over-bearing. Wordsworth sometimes talks like a man inspired on subjects of poetry (his own out of the question)—Coleridge well on every subject, and G—dwin on none. To finish this subject—Mrs. M——'s conversation is as fine-cut as her features, and I like to sit

in the room with that sort of coronet face. What she says leaves a flavour, like fine green tea. H—t's is like champaigne, and N——'s like anchovy sandwiches. H—yd—n's is like a game at trap-ball: L—'s like snap-dragon: and my own (if I do not mistake the matter) is not very much unlike a game at nine-pins! . . . One source of the conversation of authors, is the character of other authors, and on that they are rich indeed. What things they say! What stories they tell of one another, more particularly of their friends! If I durst only give some of these confidential communications! . . . The reader may perhaps think the foregoing a specimen of them:—but indeed he is mistaken.

I do not know of any greater impertinence, than for an obscure individual to set about pumping a character of celebrity. 'Bring him to me,' said a Doctor Tronchin, speaking of Rousseau, 'that I may see whether he has any thing in him.' Before you can take measure of the capacity of others, you ought to be sure that they have not taken measure of yours. They may think you a spy on them, and may not like their company. If you really want to know whether another person can talk well, begin by saying a good thing yourself, and you will have a right to look for a rejoinder. 'The best tennis-players,' says Sir Fopling Flutter, 'make the best matches.'

> ——————For wit is like a rest
> Held up at tennis, which men do the best
> With the best players.

We hear it often said of a great author, or a great actress, that they are very stupid people in private. But he was a fool that said so. *Tell me your company, and I'll tell you your manners.* In conversation, as in other things, the action and reaction should bear a certain proportion to each other.—Authors may, in some sense, be looked upon as foreigners, who are not naturalized even in their native soil. L—— once came down into the country to see us. He was 'like the most capricious poet Ovid among the Goths.' The country people thought him an oddity, and did not understand his jokes. It would be strange if they had; for he did not make any, while he staid. But when we crossed the country to Oxford, then he spoke a little. He and the old colleges were hail-fellow well met; and in the quadrangles, he 'walked gowned.'

There is a character of a gentleman; so there is a character of a scholar, which is no less easily recognised. The one has an air of books about him, as the other has of good-breeding. The one wears his thoughts as the other does his clothes, gracefully; and even if they are a little old-fashioned, they are not ridiculous: they have had

their day. The gentleman shows, by his manner, that he has been used to respect from others: the scholar that he lays claim to self-respect and to a certain independence of opinion. The one has been accustomed to the best company; the other has passed his time in cultivating an intimacy with the best authors. There is nothing forward or vulgar in the behaviour of the one; nothing shrewd or petulant in the observations of the other, as if he should astonish the bye-standers, or was astonished himself at his own discoveries. Good taste and good sense, like common politeness, are, or are supposed to be, matters of course. One is distinguished by an appearance of marked attention to every one present; the other manifests an habitual air of abstraction and absence of mind. The one is not an upstart with all the self-important airs of the founder of his own fortune; nor the other a self-taught man, with the repulsive self-sufficiency which arises from an ignorance of what hundreds have known before him. We must excuse perhaps a little conscious family-pride in the one, and a little harmless pedantry in the other.—As there is a class of the first character which sinks into the mere gentleman, that is, which has nothing but this sense of respectability and propriety to support it—so the character of a scholar not unfrequently dwindles down into the shadow of a shade, till nothing is left of it but the mere book-worm. There is often something amiable as well as enviable in this last character. I know one such instance, at least. The person I mean has an admiration for learning, if he is only dazzled by its light. He lives among old authors, if he does not enter much into their spirit. He handles the covers, and turns over the page, and is familiar with the names and dates. He is busy and self-involved. He hangs like a film and cobweb upon letters, or is like the dust upon the outside of knowledge, which should not be rudely brushed aside. He follows learning as its shadow; but as such, he is respectable. He browzes on the husk and leaves of books, as the young fawn browzes on the bark and leaves of trees. Such a one lives all his life in a dream of learning, and has never once had his sleep broken by a real sense of things. He believes implicitly in genius, truth, virtue, liberty, because he finds the names of these things in books. He thinks that love and friendship are the finest things imaginable, both in practice and theory. The legend of good women is to him no fiction. When he steals from the twilight of his cell, the scene breaks upon him like an illuminated missal, and all the people he sees are but so many figures in a *camera obscura*. He reads the world, like a favourite volume, only to find beauties in it, or like an edition of some old work which he is preparing for the press, only to make emendations in it, and

correct the errors that have inadvertently slipt in. He and his dog Tray are much the same honest, simple-hearted, faithful, affectionate creatures—if Tray could but read! His mind cannot take the impression of vice: but the gentleness of his nature turns gall to milk. He would not hurt a fly. He draws the picture of mankind from the guileless simplicity of his own heart: and when he dies, his spirit will take its smiling leave, without having ever had an ill thought of others, or the consciousness of one in itself!

ESSAY V

ON REASON AND IMAGINATION

I HATE people who have no notion of any thing but generalities, and forms, and creeds, and naked propositions, even worse than I dislike those who cannot for the soul of them arrive at the comprehension of an abstract idea. There are those (even among philosophers) who, deeming that all truth is contained within certain outlines and common topics, if you proceed to add colour or relief from individuality, protest against the use of rhetoric as an illogical thing; and if you drop a hint of pleasure or pain as ever entering into 'this breathing world,' raise a prodigious outcry against all appeals to the passions.

It is, I confess, strange to me that men who pretend to more than usual accuracy in distinguishing and analysing, should insist that in treating of human nature, of moral good and evil, the nominal differences are alone of any value, or that in describing the feelings and motives of men, any thing that conveys the smallest idea of what those feelings are in any given circumstances, or can by parity of reason ever be in any others, is a deliberate attempt at artifice and delusion—as if a knowledge or representation of things as they really exist (rules and definitions apart) was a proportionable departure from the truth. They stick to the table of contents, and never open the volume of the mind. They are for having maps, not pictures of the world we live in: as much as to say that a bird's-eye view of things contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If you want to look for the situation of a particular spot, they turn to a pasteboard globe, on which they fix their wandering gaze; and because you cannot find the object of your search in their bald 'abridgements,' tell you there is no such place, or that it is not worth inquiring after. They had better confine their studies to the celestial sphere and the signs of the zodiac; for there they will meet with no petty details to

boggle at, or contradict their vague conclusions. Such persons would make excellent theologians, but are very indifferent philosophers.—To pursue this geographical reasoning a little farther. They may say that the map of a county or shire, for instance, is too large, and conveys a disproportionate idea of its relation to the whole. And we say that their map of the globe is too small, and conveys no idea of it at all.

——— 'In the world's volume
Our Britain shows as of it, but not in it;
In a great pool a swan's nest:'

but is it really so? What! the county is bigger than the map at any rate: the representation falls short of the reality, by a million degrees, and you would omit it altogether in order to arrive at a balance of power in the non-entities of the understanding, and call this keeping within the bounds of sense and reason? and whatever does not come within those self-made limits is to be set aside as frivolous or monstrous. But 'there are more things between heaven and earth than were ever dreamt of in this philosophy.' They cannot get them all in, *of the size of life*, and therefore they reduce them on a graduated scale, till they think they can. So be it, for certain necessary and general purposes, and in compliance with the infirmity of human intellect: but at other times, let us enlarge our conceptions to the dimensions of the original objects; nor let it be pretended that we have outraged truth and nature, because we have encroached on your diminutive mechanical standard. There is no language, no description that can strictly come up to the truth and force of reality: all we have to do is to guide our descriptions and conclusions by the reality. A certain proportion must be kept: we must not invert the rules of moral perspective. Logic should enrich and invigorate its decisions by the use of imagination; as rhetoric should be governed in its application, and guarded from abuse by the checks of the understanding. Neither, I apprehend, is sufficient alone. The mind can conceive only one or a few things in their integrity: if it proceeds to more, it must have recourse to artificial substitutes, and judge by comparison merely. In the former case, it may select the least worthy, and so distort the truth of things, by giving a hasty preference: in the latter, the danger is that it may refine and abstract so much as to attach no idea at all to them, corresponding with their practical value, or their influence on the minds of those concerned with them. Men act from individual impressions; and to know mankind, we should be acquainted with nature. Men act from passion; and we can only judge of passion by sympathy. Persons of the dry and husky class above spoken of,

often seem to think even nature itself an interloper on their flimsy theories. They prefer the shadows in Plato's cave to the actual objects without it. They consider men 'as mice in an air-pump,' fit only for their experiments; and do not consider the rest of the universe, or 'all the mighty world of eye and ear,' as worth any notice at all. This is making short, but not sure work. Truth does not lie *in vacuo*, any more than in a well. We must improve our concrete experience of persons and things into the contemplation of general rules and principles; but without being grounded in individual facts and feelings, we shall end as we began, in ignorance.

It is mentioned in a short account of the Last Moments of Mr. Fox, that the conversation at the house of Lord Holland (where he died) turning upon Mr. Burke's style, that Noble Person objected to it as too gaudy and meretricious, and said that it was more profuse of flowers than fruit. On which Mr. Fox observed, that though this was a common objection, it appeared to him altogether an unfounded one; that on the contrary, the flowers often concealed the fruit beneath them, and the ornaments of style were rather an hindrance than an advantage to the sentiments they were meant to set off. In confirmation of this remark, he offered to take down the book, and translate a page any where into his own plain, natural style; and by his doing so, Lord Holland was convinced that he had often missed the thought from having his attention drawn off to the dazzling imagery. Thus people continually find fault with the colours of style as incompatible with the truth of the reasoning, but without any foundation whatever. If it were a question about the figure of two triangles, and any person were to object that one triangle was green and the other yellow, and bring this to bear upon the acuteness or obtuseness of the angles, it would be obvious to remark that the colour had nothing to do with the question. But in a dispute whether two objects are coloured alike, the discovery, that one is green and the other yellow, is fatal. So with respect to moral truth (as distinct from mathematical), whether a thing is good or evil, depends on the quantity of passion, of feeling, of pleasure and pain connected with it, and with which we must be made acquainted in order to come to a sound conclusion, and not on the inquiry, whether it is round or square. Passion, in short, is the essence, the chief ingredient in moral truth; and the warmth of passion is sure to kindle the light of imagination on the objects around it. The 'words that glow' are almost inseparable from the 'thoughts that burn.' Hence logical reason and practical truth are *disparates*. It is easy to raise an outcry against violent invectives, to talk loud against extravagance and enthusiasm, to pick a quarrel with every thing but the most calm, candid, and qualified statement of facts: but there are

enormities to which no words can do adequate justice. Are we then, in order to form a complete idea of them, to omit every circumstance of aggravation, or to suppress every feeling of impatience that arises out of the details, lest we should be accused of giving way to the influence of prejudice and passion? This would be to falsify the impression altogether, to misconstrue reason, and fly in the face of nature. Suppose, for instance, that in the discussions on the Slave-Trade, a description to the life was given of the horrors of the *Middle Passage* (as it was termed), that you saw the manner in which thousands of wretches, year after year, were stowed together in the hold of a slave-ship, without air, without light, without food, without hope, so that what they suffered in reality was brought home to you in imagination, till you felt in sickness of heart as one of them, could it be said that this was a prejudging of the case, that your knowing the extent of the evil disqualified you from pronouncing sentence upon it, and that your disgust and abhorrence were the effects of a heated imagination? No. Those evils that inflame the imagination and make the heart sick, ought not to leave the head cool. This is the very test and measure of the degree of the enormity, that it involuntarily staggers and appals the mind. If it were a common iniquity, if it were slight and partial, or necessary, it would not have this effect; but it very properly carries away the feelings, and (if you will) overpowers the judgment, because it is a mass of evil so monstrous and unwarranted as not to be endured, even in thought. A man on the rack does not suffer the less, because the extremity of anguish takes away his command of feeling and attention to appearances. A pang inflicted on humanity is not the less real, because it stirs up sympathy in the breast of humanity. Would you tame down the glowing language of justifiable passion into that of cold indifference, of self-complacent, sceptical reasoning, and thus take out the sting of indignation from the mind of the spectator? Not, surely, till you have removed the nuisance by the levers that strong feeling alone can set at work, and have thus taken away the pang of suffering that caused it! Or say that the question were proposed to you, whether, on some occasion, you should thrust your hand into the flames, and were coolly told that you were not at all to consider the pain and anguish it might give you, nor suffer yourself to be led away by any such idle appeals to natural sensibility, but to refer the decision to some abstract, technical ground of propriety, would you not laugh in your adviser's face? Oh! no; where our own interests are concerned, or where we are sincere in our professions of regard, the pretended distinction between sound judgment and lively imagination is quickly done away with. But I would not wish a better or more philosophical standard of morality, than that we should think and feel towards

others as we should, if it were our own case. If we look for a higher standard than this, we shall not find it; but shall lose the substance for the shadow! Again, suppose an extreme or individual instance is brought forward in any general question, as that of the cargo of sick slaves that were thrown overboard as so much *live lumber* by the captain of a Guinea vessel, in the year 1775, which was one of the things that first drew the attention of the public to this nefarious traffic[1], or the practice of suspending contumacious negroes in cages to have their eyes pecked out, and to be devoured alive by birds of prey—Does this form no rule, because the mischief is solitary or excessive? The rule is absolute; for we feel that nothing of the kind could take place, or be tolerated for an instant, in any system that was not rotten at the core. If such things are ever done in any circumstances with impunity, we know what must be done every day under the same sanction. It shows that there is an utter deadness to every principle of justice or feeling of humanity; and where this is the case, we may take out our tables of abstraction, and set down what is to follow through every gradation of petty, galling vexation, and wanton, unrelenting cruelty. A state of things, where a single instance of the kind can possibly happen without exciting general consternation, ought not to exist for half an hour. The parent, hydra-headed injustice ought to be crushed at once with all its viper brood. Practices, the mention of which makes the flesh creep, and that affront the light of day, ought to be put down the instant they are known, without inquiry and without repeal.

There was an example of eloquent moral reasoning connected with this subject, given in the work just referred to, which was not the less solid and profound, because it was produced by a burst of strong personal and momentary feeling. It is what follows:—'The name of a person having been mentioned in the presence of Naimbanna (a young African chieftain), who was understood by him to have publicly asserted something very degrading to the general character of Africans, he broke out into violent and vindictive language. He was immediately reminded of the Christian duty of forgiving his enemies; upon which he answered nearly in the following words:—"If a man should rob me of my money, I can forgive him; if a man should shoot at me, or try to stab me, I can forgive him; if a man should sell me and all my family to a slave-ship, so that we should pass all the rest of our days in slavery in the West Indies, I can forgive him; but" (added he, rising from his seat with much emotion) "if a man takes away the character of the people of my country, I never can forgive him." Being asked why he would not extend his forgiveness to those

[1] See Memoirs of Granville Sharp, by Prince Hoare, Esq.

who took away the character of the people of his country, he answered: "If a man should try to kill me, or should sell me and my family for slaves, he would do an injury to as many as he might kill or sell; but if any one takes away the character of Black people, that man injures Black people all over the world; and when he has once taken away their character, there is nothing which he may not do to Black people ever after. That man, for instance, will beat Black men, and say, *Oh, it is only a Black man, why should not I beat him?* That man will make slaves of Black people; for, when he has taken away their character, he will say, *Oh, they are only Black people, why should not I make them slaves?* That man will take away all the people of Africa if he can catch them; and if you ask him, But why do you take away all these people? he will say, *Oh! they are only Black people—they are not like White people—why should I not take them?* That is the reason why I cannot forgive the man who takes away the character of the people of my country.'"—MEMOIRS OF GRANVILLE SHARP, p. 369.

I conceive more real light and vital heat is thrown into the argument by this struggle of natural feeling to relieve itself from the weight of a false and injurious imputation, than would be added to it by twenty volumes of tables and calculations of the *pros* and *cons* of right and wrong, of utility and inutility, in Mr. Bentham's handwriting. In allusion to this celebrated person's theory of morals, I will here go a step farther, and deny that the dry calculation of consequences is the sole and unqualified test of right and wrong; for we are to take into the account (as well) the re-action of these consequences upon the mind of the individual and the community. In morals, the cultivation of a *moral sense* is not the last thing to be attended to—nay, it is the first. Almost the only unsophisticated or spirited remark that we meet with in Paley's Moral Philosophy, is one which is also to be found in Tucker's Light of Nature—namely, that in dispensing charity to common beggars we are not to consider so much the good it may do the object of it, as the harm it will do the person who refuses it. A sense of compassion is involuntarily excited by the immediate appearance of distress, and a violence and injury is done to the kindly feelings by withholding the obvious relief, the trifling pittance in our power. This is a remark, I think, worthy of the ingenious and amiable author from whom Paley borrowed it. So with respect to the atrocities committed in the Slave-Trade, it could not be set up as a doubtful plea in their favour, that the actual and intolerable sufferings inflicted on the individuals were compensated by certain advantages in a commercial and political point of view—in a moral sense they *cannot* be

compensated. They hurt the public mind: they harden and sear the natural feelings. The evil is monstrous and palpable; the pretended good is remote and contingent. In morals, as in philosophy, *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.* What does not touch the heart, or come home to the feelings, goes comparatively for little or nothing. A benefit that exists merely in possibility, and is judged of only by the forced dictates of the understanding, is not a set-off against an evil (say of equal magnitude in itself) that strikes upon the senses, that haunts the imagination, and lacerates the human heart. A spectacle of deliberate cruelty, that shocks every one that sees and hears of it, is not to be justified by any calculations of cold-blooded self-interest—is not to be permitted in any case. It is prejudged and self-condemned. Necessity has been therefore justly called 'the tyrant's plea.' It is no better with the mere doctrine of utility, which is the sophist's plea. Thus, for example, an infinite number of lumps of sugar put into Mr. Bentham's artificial ethical scales would never weigh against the pounds of human flesh, or drops of human blood, that are sacrificed to produce them. The taste of the former on the palate is evanescent; but the others sit heavy on the soul. The one are an object to the imagination: the others only to the understanding. But man is an animal compounded both of imagination and understanding; and, in treating of what is good for man's nature, it is necessary to consider both. A calculation of the mere ultimate advantages, without regard to natural feelings and affections, may improve the external face and physical comforts of society, but will leave it heartless and worthless in itself. In a word, the sympathy of the individual with the consequences of his own act is to be attended to (no less than the consequences themselves) in every sound system of morality; and this must be determined by certain natural laws of the human mind, and not by rules of logic or arithmetic.

The aspect of a moral question is to be judged of very much like the face of a country, by the projecting points, by what is striking and memorable, by that which leaves traces of itself behind, or 'casts its shadow before.' Millions of acres do not make a picture; nor the calculation of all the consequences in the world a sentiment. We must have some outstanding object for the mind, as well as the eye, to dwell on and recur to—something marked and decisive to give a tone and texture to the moral feelings. Not only is the attention thus roused and kept alive; but what is most important as to the principles of action, the desire of good or hatred of evil is powerfully excited. But all individual facts and history come under the head of what these people call *Imagination.* All full, true, and particular

accounts they consider as romantic, ridiculous, vague, inflammatory. As a case in point, one of this school of thinkers declares that he was qualified to write a better History of India from having never been there than if he had, as the last might lead to local distinctions or party-prejudices; that is to say, that he could describe a country better at second-hand than from original observation, or that from having seen no one object, place, or person, he could do ampler justice to the whole. It might be maintained, much on the same principle, that an artist would paint a better likeness of a person after he was dead, from description or different sketches of the face, than from having seen the individual living man. On the contrary, I humbly conceive that the seeing half a dozen wandering Lascars in the streets of London gives one a better idea of the soul of India, that cradle of the world, and (as it were) garden of the sun, than all the charts, records, and statistical reports that can be sent over, even under the classical administration of Mr. Canning. *Ex uno omnes.* One Hindoo differs more from a citizen of London than he does from all other Hindoos; and by seeing the two first, man to man, you know comparatively and essentially what they are, nation to nation. By a very few specimens you fix the great leading differences, which are nearly the same throughout. Any one thing is a better representative of its kind, than all the words and definitions in the world can be. The sum total is indeed different from the particulars; but it is not easy to guess at any general result, without some previous induction of particulars and appeal to experience.

'What can we reason, but from what we know?'

Again, it is quite wrong, instead of the most striking illustrations of human nature, to single out the stalest and tritest, as if they were most authentic and infallible; not considering that from the extremes you may infer the means, but you cannot from the means infer the extremes in any case. It may be said that the extreme and individual cases may be retorted upon us:—I deny it, unless it be with truth. The imagination is an *associating* principle; and has an instinctive perception when a thing belongs to a system, or is only an exception to it. For instance, the excesses committed by the victorious besiegers of a town do not attach to the nation committing them, but to the nature of that sort of warfare, and are common to both sides. They may be struck off the score of national prejudices. The cruelties exercised upon slaves, on the other hand, grow out of the relation between master and slave; and the mind intuitively revolts at them as such. The cant about the horrors of the French Revolution is mere cant—every body knows it to be so: each party

would have retaliated upon the other: it was a civil war, like that for a disputed succession: the general principle of the right or wrong of the change remained untouched. Neither would these horrors have taken place, except from Prussian manifestos, and treachery within: there were none in the American, and have been none in the Spanish Revolution. The massacre of St. Bartholomew arose out of the principles of that religion which exterminates with fire and sword, and keeps no faith with heretics.—If it be said that nick-names, party watch-words, bugbears, the cry of 'No Popery,' &c. are continually played off upon the imagination with the most mischievous effect, I answer that most of these bugbears and terms of vulgar abuse have arisen out of abstruse speculation or barbarous prejudice, and have seldom had their root in real facts or natural feelings. Besides, are not general topics, rules, exceptions, endlessly bandied to and fro, and balanced one against the other by the most learned disputants? Have not three-fourths of all the wars, schisms, heart-burnings in the world begun on mere points of controversy?—There are two classes whom I have found given to this kind of reasoning against the use of our senses and feelings in what concerns human nature, *viz.* knaves and fools. The last do it, because they think their own shallow dogmas settle all questions best without any farther appeal; and the first do it, because they know that the refinements of the head are more easily got rid of than the suggestions of the heart, and that a strong sense of injustice, excited by a particular case in all its aggravations, tells more against them than all the distinctions of the jurists. Facts, concrete existences, are stubborn things, and are not so soon tampered with or turned about to any point we please, as mere names and abstractions. Of these last it may be said,

'A breath can *mar* them, as a breath has made:'

and they are liable to be puffed away by every wind of doctrine, or baffled by every plea of convenience. I wonder that Rousseau gave in to this cant about the want of soundness in rhetorical and imaginative reasoning; and was so fond of this subject, as to make an abridgment of Plato's rhapsodies upon it, by which he was led to expel poets from his commonwealth. Thus two of the most flowery writers are those who have exacted the greatest severity of style from others. Rousseau was too ambitious of an exceedingly technical and scientific mode of reasoning, scarcely attainable in the mixed questions of human life, (as may be seen in his Social Contract—a work of great ability, but extreme formality of structure) and it is probable he was led into this error in seeking to overcome his too great warmth of natural

temperament and a tendency to indulge merely the impulses of passion. Burke, who was a man of fine imagination, had the good sense (without any of this false modesty) to defend the moral uses of the imagination, and is himself one of the grossest instances of its abuse.

It is not merely the fashion among philosophers—the poets also have got into a way of scouting individuality as beneath the sublimity of their pretensions, and the universality of their genius. The philosophers have become mere logicians, and their rivals mere rhetoricians; for as these last must float on the surface, and are not allowed to be harsh and crabbed and recondite like the others, by leaving out the individual, they become common-place. They cannot reason, and they must declaim. Modern tragedy, in particular, is no longer like a vessel making the voyage of life, and tossed about by the winds and waves of passion, but is converted into a handsomely-constructed steam-boat, that is moved by the sole expansive power of words. Lord Byron has launched several of these ventures lately (if ventures they may be called) and may continue in the same strain as long as he pleases. We have not now a number of *dramatis personæ* affected by particular incidents and speaking according to their feelings, or as the occasion suggests, but each mounting the rostrum, and delivering his opinion on fate, fortune, and the entire consummation of things. The individual is not of sufficient importance to occupy his own thoughts or the thoughts of others. The poet fills his page with *grandes pensées*. He covers the face of nature with the beauty of his sentiments and the brilliancy of his paradoxes. We have the subtleties of the head, instead of the workings of the heart, and possible justifications instead of the actual motives of conduct. This all seems to proceed on a false estimate of individual nature and the value of human life. We have been so used to count by millions of late, that we think the units that compose them nothing; and are so prone to trace remote principles, that we neglect the immediate results. As an instance of the opposite style of dramatic dialogue, in which the persons speak for themselves, and to one another, I will give, by way of illustration, a passage from an old tragedy, in which a brother has just caused his sister to be put to a violent death.

'*Bosola.* Fix your eye here.
Ferdinand. Constantly.
Bosola. Do you not weep?
Other sins only speak; murther shrieks out:
The element of water moistens the earth;
But blood flies upwards, and bedews the heavens.
Ferdinand. Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

Bosola. I think not so: her infelicity
Seem'd to have years too many.
Ferdinand. She and I were twins:
And should I die this instant, I had lived
Her time to a minute.'
DUCHESS OF MALFY, Act IV. Scene 2.

How fine is the constancy with which he first fixes his eye on the dead body, with a forced courage, and then, as his resolution wavers, how natural is his turning his face away, and the reflection that strikes him on her youth and beauty and untimely death, and the thought that they were twins, and his measuring his life by hers up to the present period, as if all that was to come of it were nothing! Now, I would fain ask whether there is not in this contemplation of the interval that separates the beginning from the end of life, of a life too so varied from good to ill, and of the pitiable termination of which the person speaking has been the wilful and guilty cause, enough to 'give the mind pause?' Is not that revelation as it were of the whole extent of our being which is made by the flashes of passion and stroke of calamity, a subject sufficiently staggering to have place in legitimate tragedy? Are not the struggles of the will with untoward events and the adverse passions of others as interesting and instructive in the representation as reflections on the mutability of fortune or inevitableness of destiny, or on the passions of men in general? The tragic Muse does not merely utter muffled sounds: but we see the paleness on the cheek, and the life-blood gushing from the heart! The interest we take in our own lives, in our successes or disappointments, and the *home* feelings that arise out of these, when well described, are the clearest and truest mirror in which we can see the image of human nature. For in this sense each man is a microcosm. What he is, the rest are—whatever his joys and sorrows are composed of, theirs are the same—no more, no less.

'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.'

But it must be the genuine touch of nature, not the outward flourishes and varnish of art. The spouting, oracular, didactic figure of the poet no more answers to the living man, than the lay-figure of the painter does. We may well say to such a one,

'Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
That thou dost glare with: thy bones are marrowless,
Thy blood is cold!'

Man is (so to speak) an endless and infinitely varied repetition: and if we know what one man feels, we so far know what a thousand feel

in the sanctuary of their being. Our feeling of general humanity is at once an aggregate of a thousand different truths, and it is also the same truth a thousand times told. As is our perception of this original truth, the root of our imagination, so will the force and richness of the general impression proceeding from it be. The boundary of our sympathy is a circle which enlarges itself according to its propulsion from the centre—the heart. If we are imbued with a deep sense of individual weal or woe, we shall be awe-struck at the idea of humanity in general. If we know little of it but its abstract and common properties, without their particular application, their force or degrees, we shall care just as little as we know either about the whole or the individuals. If we understand the texture and vital feeling, we then can fill up the outline, but we cannot supply the former from having the latter given. Moral and poetical truth is like expression in a picture—the one is not to be attained by smearing over a large canvas, nor the other by bestriding a vague topic. In such matters, the most pompous sciolists are accordingly found to be the greatest contemners of human life. But I defy any great tragic writer to despise that nature which he understands, or that heart which he has probed, with all its rich bleeding materials of joy and sorrow. The subject may not be a source of much triumph to him, from its alternate light and shade, but it can never become one of supercilious indifference. He must feel a strong reflex interest in it, corresponding to that which he has depicted in the characters of others. Indeed, the object and end of playing, 'both at the first and now, is to hold the mirror up to nature,' to enable us to feel for others as for ourselves, or to embody a distinct interest out of ourselves by the force of imagination and passion. This is summed up in the wish of the poet—

'To feel what others are, and know myself a man.'

If it does not do this, it loses both its dignity and its proper use.

ESSAY VI

ON APPLICATION TO STUDY

No one is idle, who can do any thing. It is conscious inability, or the sense of repeated failure, that prevents us from undertaking, or deters us from the prosecution of any work.

Wilson, the painter, might be mentioned as an exception to this rule; for he was said to be an indolent man. After bestowing a few

touches on a picture, he grew tired, and said to any friend who called in, 'Now, let us go somewhere!' But the fact is, that Wilson could not finish his pictures minutely; and that those few masterly touches, carelessly thrown in of a morning, were all that he could do. The rest would have been labour lost. Morland has been referred to as another man of genius, who could only be brought to work by fits and snatches. But his landscapes and figures (whatever degree of merit they might possess) were mere hasty sketches; and he could produce all that he was capable of, in the first half-hour, as well as in twenty years. Why bestow additional pains without additional effect? What he did was from the impulse of the moment, from the lively impression of some coarse, but striking object; and with that impulse his efforts ceased, as they justly ought. There is no use in labouring, *invitâ Minerva*—nor any difficulty in it, when the Muse is not averse.

'The labour we delight in physics pain.'

Denner finished his unmeaning portraits with a microscope, and without being ever weary of his fruitless task; for the essence of his genius was industry. Sir Joshua Reynolds, courted by the Graces and by Fortune, was hardly ever out of his painting-room; and lamented a few days, at any time spent at a friend's house or at a nobleman's seat in the country, as so much time lost. That darkly-illuminated room 'to him a kingdom was:' his pencil was the sceptre that he wielded, and the throne, on which his sitters were placed, a throne for Fame. Here he felt indeed at home; here the current of his ideas flowed full and strong; here he felt most self-possession, most command over others; and the sense of power urged him on to his delightful task with a sort of vernal cheerfulness and vigour, even in the decline of life. The feeling of weakness and incapacity would have made his hand soon falter, would have rebutted him from his object; or had the canvas mocked, and been insensible to his toil, instead of gradually turning to

'A lucid mirror, in which nature saw
All her reflected features,'

he would, like so many others, have thrown down his pencil in despair, or proceeded reluctantly, without spirit and without success. Claude Lorraine, in like manner, spent whole mornings on the banks of the Tiber or in his study, eliciting beauty after beauty, adding touch to touch, getting nearer and nearer to perfection, luxuriating in endless felicity—not merely giving the salient points, but filling up the whole intermediate space with continuous grace and beauty!

What farther motive was necessary to induce him to persevere, but the bounty of his fate? What greater pleasure could he seek for, than that of seeing the perfect image of his mind reflected in the work of his hand? But as is the pleasure and the confidence produced by consummate skill, so is the pain and the desponding effect of total failure. When for the fair face of nature, we only see an unsightly blot issuing from our best endeavours, then the nerves slacken, the tears fill the eyes, and the painter turns away from his art, as the lover from a mistress, that scorns him. Alas! how many such have, as the poet says,

'Begun in gladness;
Whereof has come in the end despondency and madness'—

not for want of will to proceed, (oh! no,) but for lack of power!

Hence it is that those often do best (up to a certain point of common-place success) who have least knowledge and least ambition to excel. Their taste keeps pace with their capacity; and they are not deterred by insurmountable difficulties, of which they have no idea. I have known artists (for instance) of considerable merit, and a certain native rough strength and resolution of mind, who have been active and enterprising in their profession, but who never seemed to think of any works but those which they had in hand; they never spoke of a picture, or appeared to have seen one: to them Titian, Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Correggio, were as if they had never been: no tones, mellowed by time to soft perfection, lured them to their luckless doom, no divine forms baffled their vain embrace; no sound of immortality rung in their ears, or drew off their attention from the calls of creditors or of hunger: they walked through collections of the finest works, like the Children in the Fiery Furnace, untouched, unapproached. With these true *terræ filii* the art seemed to begin and end: they thought only of the subject of their next production, the size of their next canvas, the grouping, the getting of the figures in; and conducted their work to its conclusion with as little distraction of mind and as few misgivings as a stage-coachman conducts a stage, or a carrier delivers a bale of goods, according to its destination. Such persons, if they do not rise above, at least seldom sink below themselves. They do not soar to the 'highest Heaven of invention,' nor penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart; but they succeed in all that they attempt, or are capable of, as men of business and industry in their calling. For them the veil of the Temple of Art is not rent asunder, and it is well: one glimpse of the Sanctuary, of the Holy of the Holies, might palsy their hands, and dim their sight for ever after!

I think there are two mistakes, common enough, on this subject; viz. that men of genius, or of first-rate capacity, do little, except by intermittent fits, or *per saltum*—and that they do that little in a slight and slovenly manner. There may be instances of this; but they are not the highest, and they are the exceptions, not the rule. On the contrary, the greatest artists have in general been the most prolific or the most elaborate, as the best writers have been frequently the most voluminous as well as indefatigable. We have a great living instance among writers, that the quality of a man's productions is not to be estimated in the inverse ratio of their quantity, I mean in the Author of Waverley; the fecundity of whose pen is no less admirable than its felicity. Shakespear is another instance of the same prodigality of genius; his materials being endlessly poured forth with no niggard or fastidious hand, and the mastery of the execution being (in many respects at least) equal to the boldness of the design. As one example among others that I might cite of the attention which he gave to his subject, it is sufficient to observe, that there is scarcely a word in any of his more striking passages that can be altered for the better. If any person, for instance, is trying to recollect a favourite line, and cannot hit upon some particular expression, it is in vain to think of substituting any other so good. That in the original text is not merely the best, but it seems the only right one. I will stop to illustrate this point a little. I was at a loss the other day for the line in Henry v.

'*Nice* customs curtesy to great kings.'

I could not recollect the word *nice*: I tried a number of others, such as *old*, *grave*, &c.—they would none of them do, but seemed all heavy, lumbering, or from the purpose: the word *nice*, on the contrary, appeared to drop into its place, and be ready to assist in paying the reverence required. Again,

'A jest's *prosperity* lies in the ear
Of him that hears it.'

I thought, in quoting from memory, of 'A jest's *success*,' 'A jest's *renown*,' &c. I then turned to the volume, and there found the very word that, of all others, expressed the idea. Had Shakespear searched through the four quarters of the globe, he could not have lighted on another to convey so exactly what he meant—a *casual*, *hollow*, *sounding* success! I could multiply such examples, but that I am sure the reader will easily supply them himself; and they shew sufficiently that Shakespear was not (as he is often represented) a loose or clumsy writer. The bold, happy texture of his style, in

which every word is prominent, and yet cannot be torn from its place without violence, any more than a limb from the body, is (one should think) the result either of vigilant pains-taking or of unerring, intuitive perception, and not the mark of crude conceptions, and 'the random, blindfold blows of Ignorance.'

There cannot be a greater contradiction to the common prejudice that 'Genius is naturally a truant and a vagabond,' than the astonishing and (on this hypothesis) unaccountable number of *chef-d'œuvres* left behind them by the old masters. The stream of their invention supplies the taste of successive generations like a river: they furnish a hundred Galleries, and preclude competition, not more by the excellence than by the number of their performances. Take Raphael and Rubens alone. There are works of theirs in single Collections enough to occupy a long and laborious life, and yet their works are spread through all the Collections of Europe. They seem to have cost them no more labour than if they 'had drawn in their breath and puffed it forth again.' But we know that they made drawings, studies, sketches of all the principal of these, with the care and caution of the merest tyros in the art; and they remain equal proofs of their capacity and diligence. The Cartoons of Raphael alone might have employed many years, and made a life of illustrious labour, though they look as if they had been struck off at a blow, and are not a tenth part of what he produced in his short but bright career. Titian and Michael Angelo lived longer, but they worked as hard and did as well. Shall we bring in competition with examples like these some trashy caricaturist or idle dauber, who has no sense of the infinite resources of nature or art, nor consequently any power to employ himself upon them for any length of time or to any purpose, to prove that genius and regular industry are incompatible qualities?

In my opinion, the very superiority of the works of the great painters (instead of being a bar to) accounts for their multiplicity. Power is pleasure; and pleasure sweetens pain. A fine poet thus describes the effect of the sight of nature on his mind:

> ——'The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms were then to me
> An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.'

So the forms of nature, or the human form divine, stood before the

great artists of old, nor required any other stimulus to lead the eye to survey, or the hand to embody them, than the pleasure derived from the inspiration of the subject, and 'propulsive force' of the mimic creation. The grandeur of their works was an argument with them, not to stop short, but to proceed. They could have no higher excitement or satisfaction than in the exercise of their art and endless generation of truth and beauty. Success prompts to exertion; and habit facilitates success. It is idle to suppose we can exhaust nature; and the more we employ our own faculties, the more we strengthen them and enrich our stores of observation and invention. The more we do, the more we *can* do. Not indeed if we *get our ideas out of our own heads*—that stock is soon exhausted, and we recur to tiresome, vapid imitations of ourselves. But this is the difference between real and mock talent, between genius and affectation. Nature is not limited, not does it become effete, like our conceit and vanity. The closer we examine it, the more it refines upon us; it expands as we enlarge and shift our view; it 'grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength.' The subjects are endless; and our capacity is invigorated as it is called out by occasion and necessity. He who does nothing, renders himself incapable of doing any thing; but while we are executing any work, we are preparing and qualifying ourselves to undertake another. The principles are the same in all nature; and we understand them better, as we verify them by experience and practice. It is not as if there was a given number of subjects to work upon, or a set of *innate* or preconceived ideas in our minds which we encroached upon with every new design; the subjects, as I said before, are endless, and we acquire ideas by imparting them. Our expenditure of intellectual wealth makes us rich: we can only be liberal as we have previously accumulated the means. By lying idle, as by standing still, we are confined to the same trite, narrow round of topics: by continuing our efforts, as by moving forwards in a road, we extend our views, and discover continually new tracts of country. Genius, like humanity, rusts for want of use.

Habit also gives promptness; and the soul of dispatch is decision. One man may write a book or paint a picture, while another is deliberating about the plan or the title-page. The great painters were able to do so much, because they knew exactly what they meant to do, and how to set about it. They were thorough-bred workmen, and were not learning their art while they were exercising it. One can do a great deal in a short time if one only knows how. Thus an author may become very voluminous, who only employs an hour or two in a day in study. If he has once obtained, by habit and reflec-

tion, a use of his pen with plenty of materials to work upon, the pages vanish before him. The time lost is in beginning, or in stopping after we have begun. If we only go forwards with spirit and confidence, we shall soon arrive at the end of our journey. A practised writer ought never to hesitate for a sentence from the moment he sets pen to paper, or think about the course he is to take. He must trust to his previous knowledge of the subject and to his immediate impulses, and he will get to the close of his task without accidents or loss of time. I can easily understand how the old divines and controversialists produced their folios: I could write folios myself, if I rose early and sat up late at this kind of occupation. But I confess I should be soon tired of it, besides wearying the reader.

In one sense, art is long and life is short. In another sense, this aphorism is not true. The best of us are idle half our time. It is wonderful how much is done in a short space, provided we set about it properly, and give our minds wholly to it. Let any one devote himself to any art or science ever so strenuously, and he will still have leisure to make considerable progress in half a dozen other acquirements. Leonardo da Vinci was a mathematician, a musician, a poet, and an anatomist, besides being one of the greatest painters of his age. The Prince of Painters was a courtier, a lover, and fond of dress and company. Michael Angelo was a prodigy of versatility of talent—a writer of Sonnets (which Wordsworth has thought worth translating) and the admirer of Dante. Salvator was a lutenist and a satirist. Titian was an elegant letter-writer, and a finished gentleman. Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses are more polished and classical even than any of his pictures. Let a man do all he can in any one branch of study, he must either exhaust himself and doze over it, or vary his pursuit, or else lie idle. All our real labour lies in a nut-shell. The mind makes, at some period or other, one Herculean effort, and the rest is mechanical. We have to climb a steep and narrow precipice at first; but after that, the way is broad and easy, where we may drive several accomplishments abreast. Men should have one principal pursuit, which may be both agreeably and advantageously diversified with other lighter ones, as the subordinate parts of a picture may be managed so as to give effect to the centre group. It has been observed by a sensible man,[1] that the having a regular occupation or professional duties to attend to is no excuse for putting forth an inelegant or inaccurate work; for a habit of industry braces and strengthens the mind, and enables it to wield its energies with additional ease and steadier purpose.—Were I allowed to instance in myself, if what I write at present is worth nothing, at least it costs

[1] The Rev. W. Shepherd, of Gateacre, in the Preface to his Life of Poggio.

me nothing. But it cost me a great deal twenty years ago. I have added little to my stock since then, and taken little from it. I 'unfold the book and volume of the brain,' and transcribe the characters I see there as mechanically as any one might copy the letters in a sampler. I do not say they came there mechanically—I transfer them to the paper mechanically. After eight or ten years' hard study, an author (at least) may go to sleep.

I do not conceive rapidity of execution necessarily implies slovenliness or crudeness. On the contrary, I believe it is often productive both of sharpness and freedom. The eagerness of composition strikes out sparkles of fancy, and runs the thoughts more naturally and closely into one another. There may be less formal method, but there is more life, and spirit, and truth. In the play and agitation of the mind, it runs over, and we dally with the subject, as the glass-blower rapidly shapes the vitreous fluid. A number of new thoughts rise up spontaneously, and they come in the proper places, because they arise from the occasion. They are also sure to partake of the warmth and vividness of that ebullition of mind, from which they spring. *Spiritus precipitandus est.* In these sort of voluntaries in composition, the thoughts are worked up to a state of projection: the grasp of the subject, the presence of mind, the flow of expression must be something akin to *extempore* speaking; or perhaps such bold but finished draughts may be compared to *fresco* paintings, which imply a life of study and great previous preparation, but of which the execution is momentary and irrevocable. I will add a single remark on a point that has been much disputed. Mr. Cobbett lays it down that the first word that occurs is always the best. I would venture to differ from so great an authority. Mr. Cobbett himself indeed writes as easily and as well as he talks; but he perhaps is hardly a rule for others without his practice and without his ability. In the hurry of composition three or four words may present themselves, one on the back of the other, and the last may be the best and right one. I grant thus much, that it is in vain to seek for the word we want, or endeavour to get at it second-hand, or as a paraphrase on some other word—it must come of itself, or arise out of an immediate impression or lively intuition of the subject; that is, the proper word must be suggested immediately by the thoughts, but it need not be presented as soon as called for. It is the same in trying to recollect the names of places, persons, etc. We cannot force our memory; they must come of themselves by natural association, as it were; but they may occur to us when we least think of it, owing to some casual circumstance or link of connexion, and long after we have given up the search. Proper expressions rise to the surface from the heat and

fermentation of the mind, like bubbles on an agitated stream. It is this which produces a clear and sparkling style.

In painting, great execution supplies the place of high finishing. A few vigorous touches, properly and rapidly disposed, will often give more of the appearance and texture (even) of natural objects than the most heavy and laborious details. But this masterly style of execution is very different from coarse daubing. I do not think, however, that the pains or polish an artist bestows upon his works necessarily interferes with their number. He only grows more enamoured of his task, proportionally patient, indefatigable, and devotes more of the day to study. The time we lose is not in over-doing what we are about, but in doing nothing. Rubens had great facility of execution, and seldom went into the details. Yet Raphael, whose oil-pictures were exact and laboured, atchieved, according to the length of time he lived, very nearly as much as he. In filling up the parts of his pictures, and giving them the last perfection they were capable of, he filled up his leisure hours, which otherwise would have lain idle on his hands. I have sometimes accounted for the slow progress of certain artists from the unfinished state in which they have left their works at last. These were evidently done by fits and throes—there was no appearance of continuous labour—one figure had been thrown in at a venture, and then another; and in the intervals between these convulsive and random efforts, more time had been wasted than could have been spent in working up each individual figure on the sure principles of art, and by a careful inspection of nature, to the utmost point of practicable perfection.

Some persons are afraid of their own works; and having made one or two successful efforts, attempt nothing ever after. They stand still midway in the road to fame, from being startled at the shadow of their own reputation. This is a needless alarm. If what they have already done possesses real power, this will increase with exercise; if it has not this power, it is not sufficient to ensure them lasting fame. Such delicate pretenders tremble on the brink of *ideal* perfection, like dew-drops on the edge of flowers; and are fascinated, like so many Narcissuses, with the image of themselves, reflected from the public admiration. It is seldom, indeed, that this cautious repose will answer its end. While seeking to sustain our reputation at the height, we are forgotten. Shakespear gave different advice, and himself acted upon it.

—— 'Perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright. To have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail,
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;

For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue. If you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right,
Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost:—
Or like a gallant horse, fall'n in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled. Then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours:
For time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his arms outstretch'd as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer. Welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was; for beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating Time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,
That all with one consent praise new-born gauds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past;
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er dusted.
The present eye praises the present object.'

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

I cannot very well conceive how it is that some writers (even of taste and genius) spend whole years in mere corrections for the press, as it were—in polishing a line or adjusting a comma. They take long to consider, exactly as there is nothing worth the trouble of a moment's thought; and the more they deliberate, the farther they are from deciding: for their fastidiousness increases with the indulgence of it, nor is there any real ground for preference. They are in the situation of *Ned Softly*, in the TATLER, who was a whole morning debating whether a line of a poetical epistle should run—

'You sing your song with so much art;'

or,

'Your song you sing with so much art.'

These are points that it is impossible ever to come to a determination about; and it is only a proof of a little mind ever to have entertained the question at all.

There is a class of persons whose minds seem to move in an element of littleness; or rather, that are entangled in trifling diffi-

culties, and incapable of extricating themselves from them. There was a remarkable instance of this improgressive, ineffectual, restless activity of temper in a late celebrated and very ingenious landscape-painter. 'Never ending, still beginning,' his mind seemed entirely made up of points and fractions, nor could he by any means arrive at a conclusion or a valuable whole. He made it his boast that he never sat with his hands before him, and yet he never did any thing. His powers and his time were frittered away in an importunate, uneasy, fidgetty attention to little things. The first picture he ever painted (when a mere boy) was a copy of his father's house; and he began it by counting the number of bricks in the front upwards and lengthways, and then made a scale of them on his canvas. This literal style and mode of study stuck to him to the last. He was put under Wilson, whose example (if any thing could) might have cured him of this pettiness of conception; but nature prevailed, as it almost always does. To take pains to no purpose, seemed to be his motto, and the delight of his life. He left (when he died, not long ago) heaps of canvasses with elaborately finished pencil outlines on them, and with perhaps a little dead-colouring added here and there. In this state they were thrown aside, as if he grew tired of his occupation the instant it gave a promise of turning to account, and his whole object in the pursuit of art was to erect scaffoldings. The same intense interest in the most frivolous things extended to the common concerns of life, to the arranging of his letters, the labelling of his books, and the inventory of his wardrobe. Yet he was a man of sense, who saw the folly and the waste of time in all this, and could warn others against it. The perceiving our own weaknesses enables us to give others excellent advice, but it does not teach us to reform them ourselves. 'Physician, heal thyself!' is the hardest lesson to follow. Nobody knew better than our artist that repose is necessary to great efforts, and that he who is never idle, labours in vain!

Another error is to spend one's life in procrastination and preparations for the future. Persons of this turn of mind stop at the threshold of art, and accumulate the means of improvement, till they obstruct their progress to the end. They are always putting off the evil day, and excuse themselves for doing nothing by commencing some new and indispensable course of study. Their projects are magnificent, but remote, and require years to complete or to put them in execution. Fame is seen in the horizon, and flies before them. Like the recreant boastful knight in Spenser, they turn their backs on their competitors, to make a great career, but never return to the charge. They make themselves masters of anatomy, of drawing, of perspective: they collect prints, casts, medallions, make studies of heads, of hands,

of the bones, the muscles; copy pictures; visit Italy, Greece, and return as they went. They fulfil the proverb, 'When you are at Rome, you must do as those at Rome do.' This circuitous, erratic pursuit of art can come to no good. It is only an apology for idleness and vanity. Foreign travel especially makes men pedants, not artists. What we seek, we must find at home or nowhere. The way to do great things is to set about something, and he who cannot find resources in himself or in his own painting-room, will perform the grand tour, or go through the circle of the arts and sciences, and end just where he began!

The same remarks that have been here urged with respect to an application to the study of art, will, in a great measure, (though not in every particular) apply to an attention to business: I mean, that exertion will generally follow success and opportunity in the one, as it does confidence and talent in the other. Give a man a motive to work, and he will work. A lawyer who is regularly feed, seldom neglects to look over his briefs: the more business, the more industry. The stress laid upon early rising is preposterous. If we have any thing to do when we get up, we shall not lie in bed, to a certainty. Thomson the poet was found late in bed by Dr. Burney, and asked why he had not risen earlier. The Scotchman wisely answered, 'I had no motive, young man!' What indeed had he to do after writing the SEASONS, but to dream out the rest of his existence, unless it were to write the CASTLE OF INDOLENCE[1]!

ESSAY VII

ON LONDONERS AND COUNTRY PEOPLE

I DO not agree with Mr. *Blackwood* in his definition of the word *Cockney*. He means by it a person who has happened at any time to live in London, and who is not a Tory—I mean by it a person who has never lived out of London, and who has got all his ideas from it.

The true Cockney has never travelled beyond the purlieus of the Metropolis, either in the body or the spirit. Primrose-hill is the Ultima Thule of his most romantic desires; Greenwich Park stands him in stead of the Vales of Arcady. Time and space are lost to

[1] School-boys attend to their tasks as soon as they acquire a relish for study, and apply to that for which they find they have a capacity. If a boy shows no inclination for the Latin tongue, it is a sign he has not a turn for learning languages. Yet he dances well. Give up the thought of making a scholar of him, and bring him up to be a dancing-master!

him. He is confined to one spot, and to the present moment. He sees every thing near, superficial, little, in hasty succession. The world turns round, and his head with it, like a roundabout at a fair, till he becomes stunned and giddy with the motion. Figures glide by as in a *camera obscura*. There is a glare, a perpetual hubbub, a noise, a crowd about him; he sees and hears a vast number of things, and knows nothing. He is pert, raw, ignorant, conceited, ridiculous, shallow, contemptible. His senses keep him alive; and he knows, inquires, and cares for nothing farther. He meets the Lord Mayor's coach, and without ceremony treats himself to an imaginary ride in it. He notices the people going to court or to a city-feast, and is quite satisfied with the show. He takes the wall of a Lord, and fancies himself as good as he. He sees an infinite quantity of people pass along the street, and thinks there is no such thing as life or a knowledge of character to be found out of London. 'Beyond Hyde Park all is a desart to him.' He despises the country, because he is ignorant of it, and the town, because he is familiar with it. He is as well acquainted with St. Paul's as if he had built it, and talks of Westminster Abbey and Poets' Corner with great indifference. The King, the House of Lords and Commons are his very good friends. He knows the members for Westminster or the City by sight, and bows to the Sheriffs or the Sheriffs' men. He is hand and glove with the Chairman of some Committee. He is, in short, a great man by proxy, and comes so often in contact with fine persons and things, that he rubs off a little of the gilding, and is surcharged with a sort of second-hand, vapid, tingling, troublesome self-importance. His personal vanity is thus continually flattered and perked up into ridiculous self-complacency, while his imagination is jaded and impaired by daily misuse. Every thing is vulgarised in his mind. Nothing dwells long enough on it to produce an interest; nothing is contemplated sufficiently at a distance to excite curiosity or wonder. *Your true Cockney is your only true leveller.* Let him be as low as he will, he fancies he is as good as any body else. He has no respect for himself, and still less (if possible) for you. He cares little about his own advantages, if he can only make a jest at yours. Every feeling comes to him through a medium of levity and impertinence; nor does he like to have this habit of mind disturbed by being brought into collision with any thing serious or respectable. He despairs (in such a crowd of competitors) of distinguishing himself, but laughs heartily at the idea of being able to trip up the heels of other people's pretensions. A Cockney feels no gratitude. This is a first principle with him. He regards any obligation you confer upon him as a species of imposition, a ludicrous assumption of

fancied superiority. He talks about everything, for he has heard something about it; and understanding nothing of the matter, concludes he has as good a right as you. He is a politician; for he has seen the Parliament House: he is a critic; because he knows the principal actors by sight—has a taste for music, because he belongs to a glee-club at the West End, and is gallant, in virtue of sometimes frequenting the lobbies at half-price. A mere Londoner, in fact, from the opportunities he has of knowing something of a number of objects (and those striking ones) fancies himself a sort of privileged person; remains satisfied with the assumption of merits, so much the more unquestionable as they are not his own; and from being dazzled with noise, show, and appearances, is less capable of giving a real opinion, or entering into any subject than the meanest peasant. There are greater lawyers, orators, painters, philosophers, poets, players in London, than in any other part of the United Kingdom: he is a Londoner, and therefore it would be strange if he did not know more of law, eloquence, art, philosophy, poetry, acting, than any one without his local advantages, and who is merely from the country. This is a *non sequitur*; and it constantly appears so when put to the test.

A real Cockney is the poorest creature in the world, the most literal, the most mechanical, and yet he too lives in a world of romance —a fairy-land of his own. He is a citizen of London; and this abstraction leads his imagination the finest dance in the world. London is the first city on the habitable globe; and therefore he must be superior to every one who lives out of it. There are more people in London than any where else; and though a dwarf in stature, his person swells out and expands into *ideal* importance and borrowed magnitude. He resides in a garret or in a two pair of stairs' back room; yet he talks of the magnificence of London, and gives himself airs of consequence upon it, as if all the houses in Portman or in Grosvenor Square were his by right or in reversion. 'He is owner of all he surveys.' The Monument, the Tower of London, St. James's Palace, the Mansion House, White-Hall, are part and parcel of his being. Let us suppose him to be a lawyer's clerk at half-a-guinea a week: but he knows the Inns of Court, the Temple Gardens, and Gray's-Inn Passage, sees the lawyers in their wigs walking up and down Chancery Lane, and has advanced within half-a-dozen yards of the Chancellor's chair:—who can doubt that he understands (by implication) every point of law (however intricate) better than the most expert country practitioner? He is a shopman, and nailed all day behind the counter: but he sees hundreds and thousands of gay, well-dressed people pass—an endless phantasmagoria

—and enjoys their liberty and gaudy fluttering pride. He is a footman—but he rides behind beauty, through a crowd of carriages, and visits a thousand shops. Is he a tailor—that last infirmity of human nature? The stigma on his profession is lost in the elegance of the patterns he provides, and of the persons he adorns; and he is something very different from a mere country botcher. Nay, the very scavenger and nightman thinks the dirt in the street has something precious in it, and his employment is solemn, silent, sacred, peculiar to London! A *barker* in Monmouth Street, a slop-seller in Radcliffe Highway, a tapster at a night-cellar, a beggar in St. Giles's, a drab in Fleet-Ditch, live in the eyes of millions, and eke out a dreary, wretched, scanty, or loathsome existence from the gorgeous, busy, glowing scene around them. It is a common saying among such persons that 'they had rather be hanged in London than die a natural death out of it any where else'—Such is the force of habit and imagination. Even the eye of childhood is dazzled and delighted with the polished splendour of the jewellers' shops, the neatness of the turnery ware, the festoons of artificial flowers, the confectionery, the chemists' shops, the lamps, the horses, the carriages, the sedan-chairs: to this was formerly added a set of traditional associations—Whittington and his Cat, Guy Faux and the Gunpowder Treason, the Fire and the Plague of London, and the Heads of the Scotch Rebels that were stuck on Temple Bar in 1745. These have vanished, and in their stead the curious and romantic eye must be content to pore in Pennant for the scite of old London-Wall, or to peruse the sentimental mile-stone that marks the distance to the place 'where Hickes's Hall formerly stood!'

The *Cockney* lives in a go-cart of local prejudices and positive illusions; and when he is turned out of it, he hardly knows how to stand or move. He ventures through Hyde Park Corner, as a cat crosses a gutter. The trees pass by the coach very oddly. The country has a strange blank appearance. It is not lined with houses all the way, like London. He comes to places he never saw or heard of. He finds the world is bigger than he thought for. He might have dropped from the moon, for any thing he knows of the matter. He is mightily disposed to laugh, but is half afraid of making some blunder. Between sheepishness and conceit, he is in a very ludicrous situation. He finds that the people walk on two legs, and wonders to hear them talk a dialect so different from his own. He perceives London fashions have got down into the country before him, and that some of the better sort are dressed as well as he is. A drove of pigs or cattle stopping the road is a very troublesome interruption. A crow in a field, a magpie in a hedge, are to him

very odd animals—he can't tell what to make of them, or how they live. He does not altogether like the accommodations at the inns—it is not what he has been used to in town. He begins to be communicative—says he was 'born within the sound of Bow-bell,' and attempts some jokes, at which nobody laughs. He asks the coachman a question, to which he receives no answer. All this is to him very unaccountable and unexpected. He arrives at his journey's end; and instead of being the great man he anticipated among his friends and country relations, finds that they are barely civil to him, or make a butt of him; have topics of their own which he is as completely ignorant of as they are indifferent to what he says, so that he is glad to get back to London again, where he meets with his favourite indulgences and associates, and fancies the whole world is occupied with what he hears and sees.

A Cockney loves a tea-garden in summer, as he loves the play or the Cider-Cellar in winter—where he sweetens the air with the fumes of tobacco, and makes it echo to the sound of his own voice. This kind of suburban retreat is a most agreeable relief to the close and confined air of a city life. The imagination, long pent up behind a counter or between brick walls, with noisome smells, and dingy objects, cannot bear at once to launch into the boundless expanse of the country, but 'shorter excursions tries,' coveting something between the two, and finding it at White-conduit House, or the Rosemary Branch, or Bagnigge Wells. The landlady is seen at a bow-window in near perspective, with punch-bowls and lemons disposed orderly around—the lime-trees or poplars wave overhead to 'catch the breezy air,' through which, typical of the huge dense cloud that hangs over the metropolis, curls up the thin, blue, odoriferous vapour of Virginia or Oronooko—the benches are ranged in rows, the fields and hedge-rows spread out their verdure; Hampstead and Highgate are seen in the back-ground, and contain the imagination within gentle limits—here the holiday people are playing ball; here they are playing bowls—here they are quaffing ale, there sipping tea—here the loud wager is heard, there the political debate. In a sequestered nook a slender youth with purple face and drooping head, nodding over a glass of gin toddy, breathes in tender accents—'There's nought so sweet on earth as Love's young dream;' while 'Rosy Ann' takes its turn, and 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled' is thundered forth in accents that might wake the dead. In another part sit carpers and critics, who dispute the score of the reckoning or the game, or cavil at the taste and execution of the *would-be* Brahams and Durusets. Of this latter class was Dr. Goodman, a man of other times—I mean of those of Smollett and Defoe—who was

curious in opinion, obstinate in the wrong, great in little things, and inveterate in petty warfare. I vow he held me an argument once 'an hour by St. Dunstan's clock,' while I held an umbrella over his head (the friendly protection of which he was unwilling to quit to walk in the rain to Camberwell) to prove to me that Richard Pinch was neither a fives-player nor a pleasing singer. 'Sir,' said he, 'I deny that Mr. Pinch plays the game. He is a cunning player, but not a good one. I grant his tricks, his little mean dirty ways, but he is not a manly antagonist. He has no hit, and no left-hand. How then can he set up for a superior player? And then as to his always striking the ball against the side-wings at Copenhagen-house, Cavanagh, sir, used to say, "The wall was made to hit at!" I have no patience with such pitiful shifts and advantages. They are an insult upon so fine and athletic a game! And as to his setting up for a singer, it's quite ridiculous. You know, Mr. H——, that to be a really excellent singer, a man must lay claim to one of two things; in the first place, sir, he must have a naturally fine ear for music, or secondly, an early education, exclusively devoted to that study. But no one ever suspected Mr. Pinch of refined sensibility; and his education, as we all know, has been a little at large. Then again, why should he of all other things be always singing "Rosy Ann," and "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," till one is sick of hearing them? It's preposterous, and I mean to tell him so. You know, I'm sure, without my hinting it, that in the first of these admired songs, the sentiment is voluptuous and tender, and in the last patriotic. Now Pinch's romance never wandered from behind his counter, and his patriotism lies in his breeches' pocket. Sir, the utmost he should aspire to would be to play upon the Jews' harp!' This story of the Jews' harp tickled some of Pinch's friends, who gave him various hints of it, which nearly drove him mad, till he discovered what it was; for though no jest or sarcasm ever had the least effect upon him, yet he cannot bear to think that there should be any joke of this kind about him, and he not in the secret: it makes against that *knowing* character which he so much affects. Pinch is in one respect a complete specimen of a *Cockney*. He never has any thing to say, and yet is never at a loss for an answer. That is, his pertness keeps exact pace with his dulness. His friend, the Doctor, used to complain of this in good set terms.—'You can never make any thing of Mr. Pinch,' he would say. 'Apply the most cutting remark to him, and his only answer is, "*The same to you, sir.*" If Shakespear were to rise from the dead to confute him, I firmly believe it would be to no purpose. I assure you, I have found it so. I once thought indeed I had him at

a disadvantage, but I was mistaken. You shall hear, sir. I had been reading the following sentiment in a modern play—"The Road to Ruin," by the late Mr. Holcroft—"For how should the soul of Socrates inhabit the body of a stocking-weaver?" This was pat to the point (you know our friend is a hosier and haberdasher) I came full with it to keep an appointment I had with Pinch, began a game, quarrelled with him in the middle of it on purpose, went up stairs to dress, and as I was washing my hands in the slop-basin (watching my opportunity) turned coolly round and said, "It's impossible there should be any sympathy between you and me, Mr. Pinch: for as the poet says, how should the soul of Socrates inhabit the body of a stocking-weaver?" "Ay," says he, "does the poet say so? *then the same to you, sir!*" I was confounded, I gave up the attempt to conquer him in wit or argument. He would pose the Devil, sir, by his "*The same to you, sir.*"' We had another joke against Richard Pinch, to which the Doctor was not a party, which was, that being asked after the respectability of the *Hole in the Wall*, at the time that Randall took it, he answered quite unconsciously, 'Oh! it's a very genteel place, I go there myself sometimes!' Dr. Goodman was descended by the mother's side from the poet Jago, was a private gentleman in town, and a medical dilettanti in the country, dividing his time equally between business and pleasure; had an inexhaustible flow of words, and an imperturbable vanity, and held 'stout notions on the metaphysical score.' He maintained the free agency of man, with the spirit of a martyr and the gaiety of a man of wit and pleasure about town—told me he had a curious tract on that subject by A. C. (Anthony Collins) which he carefully locked up in his box, lest any one should see it but himself, to the detriment of their character and morals, and put it to me whether it was not hard, on the principles of *philosophical necessity*, for a man to come to be hanged? To which I replied, 'I thought it hard on any terms!' A knavish *marker*, who had listened to the dispute, laughed at this retort, and seemed to assent to the truth of it, supposing it might one day be his own case.

Mr. Smith and the Brangtons, in 'Evelina,' are the finest possible examples of the spirit of *Cockneyism*. I once knew a linen-draper in the City, who owned to me he did not quite like this part of Miss Burney's novel. He said, 'I myself lodge in a first floor, where there are young ladies in the house: they sometimes have company, and if I am out, they ask me to lend them the use of my apartment, which I readily do out of politeness, or if it is an agreeable party, I perhaps join them. All this is so like what passes in the novel, that I fancy myself a sort of second Mr. Smith, and am not quite easy at

it!' This was mentioned to the fair Authoress, and she was delighted to find that her characters were so true, that an actual person fancied himself to be one of them. The resemblance, however, was only in the externals; and the real modesty of the individual stumbled on the likeness to a city coxcomb!

It is curious to what a degree persons, brought up in certain occupations in a great city, are shut up from a knowledge of the world, and carry their simplicity to a pitch of unheard-of extravagance. London is the only place in which the child grows completely up into the man. I have known characters of this kind, which, in the way of childish ignorance and self-pleasing delusion, exceeded any thing to be met with in Shakespear or Ben Jonson, or the old comedy. For instance, the following may be taken as a true sketch. Imagine a person with a florid, shining complexion like a plough-boy, large staring teeth, a merry eye, his hair stuck into the fashion with curling-irons and pomatum, a slender figure, and a decent suit of black—add to which the thoughtlessness of the school-boy, the forwardness of the thriving tradesman, and the plenary consciousness of the citizen of London—and you have Mr. Dunster before you, the fishmonger in the Poultry. You shall hear how he chirps over his cups, and exults in his private opinions. 'I'll play no more with you,' I said, 'Mr. Dunster—you are five points in the game better than I am.' I had just lost three half-crown rubbers at cribbage to him, which loss of mine he presently thrust into a canvas pouch (not a silk purse) out of which he had produced just before, first a few halfpence, then half a dozen pieces of silver, then a handfull of guineas, and lastly, lying *perdu* at the bottom, a fifty pound Bank-Note. 'I'll tell you what,' I said, 'I should like to play you a game at marbles'—this was at a sort of Christmas party or Twelfth Night merry-making. 'Marbles!' said Dunster, catching up the sound, and his eye brightening with childish glee, 'What! you mean *ring-taw?*' 'Yes.' 'I should beat you at it, to a certainty. I was one of the best in our school (it was at Clapham, sir, the Rev. Mr. Denman's, at Clapham, was the place where I was brought up) though there were two others there better than me. They were the best that ever were. I'll tell you, sir, I'll give you an idea. There was a water-butt or cistern, sir, at our school, that turned with a cock. Now suppose that brass-ring that the window-curtain is fastened to, to be the cock, and that these boys were standing where we are, about twenty feet off—well, sir, I'll tell you what I have seen them do. One of them had a favourite taw (or *alley* we used to call them) he'd take aim at the cock of the cistern with this marble, as I may do now. Well, sir, will you believe it? such was his strength of knuckle and certainty of aim,

he 'd hit it, turn it, let the water out, and then, sir, when the water had run out as much as it was wanted, the other boy (he 'd just the same strength of knuckle, and the same certainty of eye) he 'd aim at it too, be sure to hit it, turn it round, and stop the water from running out. Yes, what I tell you is very remarkable, but it 's true. One of these boys was named Cock, and t' other Butler.' 'They might have been named Spigot and Fawcett, my dear sir, from your account of them.' 'I should not mind playing you at fives neither, though I 'm out of practice. I think I should beat you in a week: I was a real good one at that. A pretty game, sir! I had the finest ball, that I suppose ever was seen. Made it myself, I 'll tell you how, sir. You see, I put a piece of cork at the bottom, then I wound some fine worsted yarn round it, then I had to bind it round with some packthread, and then sew the case on. You 'd hardly believe it, but I was the envy of the whole school for that ball. They all wanted to get it from me, but lord, sir, I would let none of them come near it. I kept it in my waistcoat pocket all day, and at night I used to take it to bed with me and put it under my pillow. I couldn't sleep easy without it.'

The same idle vein might be found in the country, but I doubt whether it would find a tongue to give it utterance. Cockneyism is a ground of native shallowness mounted with pertness and conceit. Yet with all this simplicity and extravagance in dilating on his favourite topics, Dunster is a man of spirit, of attention to business, knows how to make out and get in his bills, and is far from being hen-pecked. One thing is certain, that such a man must be a true Englishman and a loyal subject. He has a slight tinge of letters, with shame I confess it—has in his possession a volume of the European Magazine for the year 1761, and is an humble admirer of Tristram Shandy (particularly the story of the King of Bohemia and his Seven Castles, which is something in his own endless manner) and of Gil Blas of Santillane. Over these (the last thing before he goes to bed at night) he smokes a pipe, and meditates for an hour. After all, what is there in these harmless half-lies, these fantastic exaggerations, but a literal, prosaic, *Cockney* translation of the admired lines in Gray's Ode to Eton College:—

> 'What idle progeny succeed
> To chase the rolling circle's speed
> Or urge the flying ball?'

A man shut up all his life in his shop, without any thing to interest him from one year's end to another but the cares and details of business, with scarcely any intercourse with books or opportunities for

society, distracted with the buzz and glare and noise about him, turns for relief to the retrospect of his childish years; and there, through the long vista, at one bright loop-hole, leading out of the thorny mazes of the world into the clear morning light, he sees the idle fancies and gay amusements of his boyhood dancing like motes in the sunshine. Shall we blame or should we laugh at him, if his eye glistens, and his tongue grows wanton in their praise?

None but a Scotchman would—that pragmatical sort of personage, who thinks it a folly ever to have been young, and who instead of dallying with the frail past, bends his brows upon the future, and looks only to the *main-chance*. Forgive me, dear Dunster, if I have drawn a sketch of some of thy venial foibles, and delivered thee into the hands of these Cockneys of the North, who will fall upon thee and devour thee, like so many cannibals, without a grain of salt!

If familiarity in cities breeds contempt, ignorance in the country breeds aversion and dislike. People come too much in contact in town: in other places they live too much apart, to unite cordially and easily. Our feelings, in the former case, are dissipated and exhausted by being called into constant and vain activity; in the latter they rust and grow dead for want of use. If there is an air of levity and indifference in London manners, there is a harshness, a moroseness, and disagreeable restraint in those of the country. We have little disposition to sympathy, when we have few persons to sympathise with: we lose the relish and capacity for social enjoyment, the seldomer we meet. A habit of sullenness, coldness, and misanthropy grows upon us. If we look for hospitality and a cheerful welcome in country places, it must be in those where the arrival of a stranger is an event, the recurrence of which need not be greatly apprehended, or it must be on rare occasions, on 'some high festival of once a year.' Then indeed the stream of hospitality, so long dammed up, may flow without stint for a short season; or a stranger may be expected with the same sort of eager impatience as a caravan of wild beasts, or any other natural curiosity, that excites our wonder and fills up the craving of the mind after novelty. By degrees, however, even this last principle loses its effect: books, newspapers, whatever carries us out of ourselves into a world of which we see and know nothing, becomes distasteful, repulsive; and we turn away with indifference or disgust from every thing that disturbs our lethargic animal existence, or takes off our attention from our petty, local interests and pursuits. Man, left long to himself, is no better than a mere clod; or his activity, for want of some other vent, preys upon himself, or is directed to splenetic, peevish dislikes, or vexatious, harassing persecution of others. I once drew a picture of a country-life: it was a

portrait of a particular place, a caricature if you will, but with certain allowances, I fear it was too like in the individual instance, and that it would hold too generally true. *See* ROUND TABLE, vol. ii. p. 116.

If these then are the faults and vices of the inhabitants of town or of the country, where should a man go to live, so as to escape from them? I answer, that in the country we have the society of the groves, the fields, the brooks, and in London a man may keep to himself, or chuse his company as he pleases.

It appears to me that there is an amiable mixture of these two opposite characters in a person who chances to have past his youth in London, and who has retired into the country for the rest of his life. We may find in such a one a social polish, a pastoral simplicity. He rusticates agreeably, and vegetates with a degree of sentiment. He comes to the next post-town to see for letters, watches the coaches as they pass, and eyes the passengers with a look of familiar curiosity, thinking that he too was a gay fellow in his time. He turns his horse's head down the narrow lane that leads homewards, puts on an old coat to save his wardrobe, and fills his glass nearer to the brim. As he lifts the purple juice to his lips and to his eye, and in the dim solitude that hems him round, thinks of the glowing line—

'This bottle 's the sun of our table'—

another sun rises upon his imagination; the sun of his youth, the blaze of vanity, the glitter of the metropolis, 'glares round his soul, and mocks his closing eye-lids.' The distant roar of coaches in his ears—the pit stare upon him with a thousand eyes—Mrs. Siddons, Bannister, King, are before him—he starts as from a dream, and swears he will to London; but the expense, the length of way deters him, and he rises the next morning to trace the footsteps of the hare that has brushed the dew-drops from the lawn, or to attend a meeting of Magistrates! Mr. Justice Shallow answered in some sort to this description of a retired Cockney and indigenous country-gentleman. He 'knew the Inns of Court, where they would talk of mad Shallow yet, and where the bona robas were, and had them at commandment: aye, and had heard the chimes at midnight!'

It is a strange state of society (such as that in London) where a man does not know his next-door neighbour, and where the feelings (one would think) must recoil upon themselves, and either fester or become obtuse. Mr. Wordsworth, in the preface to his poem of the 'Excursion,' represents men in cities as so many wild beasts or evil spirits, shut up in cells of ignorance, without natural affections, and barricadoed down in sensuality and selfishness. The nerve of humanity is bound up, according to him, the circulation of the blood

stagnates. And it would be so, if men were merely cut off from intercourse with their immediate neighbours, and did not meet together generally and more at large. But man in London becomes, as Mr. Burke has it, a sort of 'public creature.' He lives in the eye of the world, and the world in his. If he witnesses less of the details of private life, he has better opportunities of observing its larger masses and varied movements. He sees the stream of human life pouring along the streets—its comforts and embellishments piled up in the shops—the houses are proofs of the industry, the public buildings of the art and magnificence of man; while the public amusements and places of resort are a centre and support for social feeling. A playhouse alone is a school of humanity, where all eyes are fixed on the same gay or solemn scene, where smiles or tears are spread from face to face, and where a thousand hearts beat in unison! Look at the company in a country-theatre (in comparison) and see the coldness, the sullenness, the want of sympathy, and the way in which they turn round to scan and scrutinise one another. In London there is a *public*; and each man is part of it. We are gregarious, and affect the kind. We have a sort of abstract existence; and a community of ideas and knowledge (rather than local proximity) is the bond of society and good-fellowship. This is one great cause of the tone of political feeling in large and populous cities. There is here a visible body-politic, a type and image of that huge Leviathan the State. We comprehend that vast denomination, the *People*, of which we see a tenth part daily moving before us; and by having our imaginations emancipated from petty interests and personal dependence, we learn to venerate ourselves as men, and to respect the rights of human nature. Therefore it is that the citizens and freemen of London and Westminster are patriots by prescription, philosophers and politicians by the right of their birth-place. In the country, men are no better than a herd of cattle or scattered deer. They have no idea but of individuals, none of rights or principles—and a king, as the greatest individual, is the highest idea they can form. He is 'a species alone,' and as superior to any single peasant as the latter is to the peasant's dog, or to a crow flying over his head. In London the king is but as one to a million (numerically speaking), is seldom seen, and then distinguished only from others by the superior graces of his person. A country 'squire or a lord of the manor is a greater man in his village or hundred!

ESSAY VIII

ON THE SPIRIT OF OBLIGATIONS

The two rarest things to be met with are good sense and good-nature. For one man who judges right, there are twenty who can say good things; as there are numbers who will serve you or do friendly actions, for one who really wishes you well. It has been said, and often repeated, that 'mere good-nature is a fool:' but I think that the dearth of sound sense, for the most part, proceeds from the want of a real, unaffected interest in things, except as they react upon ourselves; or from a neglect of the maxim of that good old philanthropist, who said, '*Nihil humani a me alienum puto.*' The narrowness of the heart warps the understanding, and makes us weigh objects in the scales of our self-love, instead of those of truth and justice. We consider not the merits of the case, or what is due to others, but the manner in which our own credit or consequence will be affected; and adapt our opinions and conduct to the last of these rather than to the first. The judgment is seldom wrong where the feelings are right; and they generally are so, provided they are warm and sincere. He who intends others well, is likely to advise them for the best; he who has any cause at heart, seldom ruins it by his imprudence. Those who play the public or their friends slippery tricks, have in secret no objection to betray them.

One finds out the folly and malice of mankind by the impertinence of friends—by their professions of service and tenders of advice—by their fears for your reputation and anticipation of what the world may say of you; by which means they suggest objections to your enemies, and at the same time absolve themselves from the task of justifying your errors, by having warned you of the consequences—by the care with which they tell you ill-news, and conceal from you any flattering circumstance—by their dread of your engaging in any creditable attempt, and mortification, if you succeed—by the difficulties and hindrances they throw in your way—by their satisfaction when you happen to make a slip or get into a scrape, and their determination to tie your hands behind you, lest you should get out of it—by their panic-terrors at your entering into a vindication of yourself, lest in the course of it, you should call upon them for a certificate to your character—by their luke-warmness in defending, by their readiness in betraying you—by the high standard by which

they try you, and to which you can hardly ever come up—by their forwardness to partake your triumphs, by their backwardness to share your disgrace—by their acknowledgment of your errors out of candour, and suppression of your good qualities out of envy—by their not contradicting, or by their joining in the cry against you, lest they too should become objects of the same abuse—by their playing the game into your adversaries' hands, by always letting their imaginations take part with their cowardice, their vanity, and selfishness against you; and thus realising or hastening all the ill consequences they affect to deplore, by spreading abroad that very spirit of distrust, obloquy, and hatred which they predict will be excited against you!

In all these pretended demonstrations of an over-anxiety for our welfare, we may detect a great deal of spite and ill-nature lurking under the disguise of a friendly and officious zeal. It is wonderful how much love of mischief and rankling spleen lies at the bottom of the human heart, and how a constant supply of gall seems as necessary to the health and activity of the mind as of the body. Yet perhaps it ought not to excite much surprise that this gnawing, morbid, acrimonious temper should produce the effects it does, when, if it does not vent itself on others, it preys upon our own comforts, and makes us see the worst side of every thing, even as it regards our own prospects and tranquillity. It is the not being comfortable in ourselves, that makes us seek to render other people uncomfortable. A person of this character will advise you against a prosecution for a libel, and shake his head at your attempting to shield yourself from a shower of calumny—It is not that he is afraid you will be *nonsuited*, but that you will gain a verdict! They caution you against provoking hostility, in order that you may submit to indignity. They say that 'if you publish a certain work, it will be your ruin'—hoping that it will, and by their tragical denunciations, bringing about this very event as far as it lies in their power, or at any rate, enjoying a premature triumph over you in the mean time. What I would say to any friend who may be disposed to foretel a general outcry against any work of mine, would be to request him to judge and speak of it for himself, as he thinks it deserves—and not by his overweening scruples and qualms of conscience on my account, to afford those very persons whose hostility he deprecates the cue they are to give to party-prejudice, and which they may justify by his authority.

Suppose you are about to give Lectures at a Public Institution, these friends and well-wishers hope 'you 'll be turned out—if you preserve your principles, they are sure you will.' Is it that your

consistency gives them any concern? No, but they are uneasy at your gaining a chance of a little popularity—they do not like this new feather in your cap, they wish to see it struck out, *for the sake of your character*—and when this was once the case, it would be an additional relief to them to see your character following the same road the next day. The exercise of their bile seems to be the sole employment and gratification of such people. They deal in the miseries of human life. They are always either hearing or foreboding some new grievance. They cannot contain their satisfaction, if you tell them any mortification or cross-accident that has happened to yourself; and if you complain of their want of sympathy, they laugh in your face. This would be unaccountable, but for the spirit of perversity and contradiction implanted in human nature. If things go right, there is nothing to be done—these active-minded persons grow restless, dull, vapid,—life is a sleep, a sort of *euthanasia*—Let them go wrong, and all is well again; they are once more on the alert, have something to pester themselves and other people about; may wrangle on, and 'make mouths at the invisible event!' Luckily, there is no want of materials for this disposition to work upon, *there is plenty of grist for the mill.* If you fall in love, they tell you (by way of consolation) it is a pity that you do not fall downstairs and fracture a limb—it would be a relief to your mind, and shew you your folly. So they would reform the world. The class of persons I speak of are almost uniform grumblers and croakers against governments; and it must be confessed, governments are of great service in fostering their humours. 'Born for their use, they live but to oblige them.' While kings are left free to exercise their proper functions, and poet-laureats make out their Mittimus to Heaven without a warrant, they will never stop the mouths of the censorious by changing their dispositions; the juices of faction will ferment, and the secretions of the state be duly performed! I do not mind when a character of this sort meets a Minister of State like an east-wind round a corner, and gives him an ague-fit; but why should he meddle with me? Why should he tell me I write too much, and say that I should gain reputation if I could contrive to starve for a twelvemonth? Or if I apply to him for a loan of fifty pounds for present necessity, send me word back that he has too much regard for me, to comply with my request? It is unhandsome irony. It is not friendly, 'tis not pardonable.[1]

I like real good-nature and good-will, better than I do any offers of patronage or plausible rules for my conduct in life. I may suspect the soundness of the last, and I may not be quite sure of the motives

[1] This circumstance did not happen to me, but to an acquaintance.

of the first. People complain of ingratitude for benefits, and of the neglect of wholesome advice. In the first place, we pay little attention to advice, because we are seldom thought of in it. The person who gives it either contents himself to lay down (*ex cathedrâ*) certain vague, general maxims, and 'wise saws,' which we knew before; or, instead of considering what we *ought to do*, recommends what he himself *would do*. He merely substitutes his own will, caprice, and prejudices for ours, and expects us to be guided by them. Instead of changing places with us (to see what is best to be done in the given circumstances), he insists on our looking at the question from his point of view, and acting in such a manner as to please him. This is not at all reasonable; for *one man's meat*, according to the old adage, *is another man's poison*. And it is not strange, that starting from such opposite premises, we should seldom jump in a conclusion, and that the art of giving and taking advice is little better than a game at cross-purposes. I have observed that those who are the most inclined to assist others are the least forward or peremptory with their advice; for having our interest really at heart, they consider what can, rather than what *cannot* be done, and aid our views and endeavour to avert ill consequences by moderating our impatience and allaying irritations, instead of thwarting our main design, which only tends to make us more extravagant and violent than ever. In the second place, benefits are often conferred out of ostentation or pride, rather than from true regard; and the person obliged is too apt to perceive this. People who are fond of appearing in the light of patrons will perhaps go through fire and water to serve you, who yet would be sorry to find you no longer wanted their assistance, and whose friendship cools and their good-will slackens, as you are relieved by their active zeal from the necessity of being further beholden to it. Compassion and generosity are their favourite virtues; and they countenance you, as you afford them opportunities for exercising them. The instant you can go alone, or can stand upon your own ground, you are discarded as unfit for their purpose.

This is something more than mere good-nature or humanity. A thoroughly good-natured man, a real friend, is one who is pleased at our good-fortune, as well as prompt to seize every occasion of relieving our distress. We apportion our gratitude accordingly. We are thankful for good-will rather than for services, for the motive than the *quantum* of favour received—a kind word or look is never forgotten, while we cancel prouder and weightier obligations; and those who esteem us or evince a partiality to us are those whom we still consider as our best friends. Nay, so strong is this feeling,

that we extend it even to those counterfeits in friendship, flatterers and sycophants. Our self-love, rather than our self-interest, is the master-key to our affections.

I am not convinced that those are always the best-natured or the best-conditioned men, who busy themselves most with the distresses of their fellow-creatures. I do not know that those whose names stand at the head of all subscriptions to charitable institutions, and who are perpetual stewards of dinners and meetings to encourage and promote the establishment of asylums for the relief of the blind, the halt, and the orphan poor, are persons gifted with the best tempers or the kindliest feelings. I do not dispute their virtue, I doubt their sensibility. I am not here speaking of those who make a trade of the profession of humanity, or set their names down out of mere idle parade and vanity. I mean those who really enter into the details and drudgery of this sort of service, *con amore*, and who delight in surveying and in diminishing the amount of human misery. I conceive it possible, that a person who is going to pour oil and balm into the wounds of afflicted humanity, at a meeting of the Western Dispensary, by handsome speeches and by a handsome donation (not grudgingly given) may be thrown into a fit of rage that very morning, by having his toast too much buttered, may quarrel with the innocent prattle and amusements of his children, cry 'Pish!' at every observation his wife utters, and scarcely feel a moment's comfort at any period of his life, except when he hears or reads of some case of pressing distress that calls for his immediate interference, and draws off his attention from his own situation and feelings by the act of alleviating it. Those martyrs to the cause of humanity, in short, who run the gauntlet of the whole catalogue of unheard-of crimes and afflicting casualties, who ransack prisons, and plunge into lazar-houses and slave-ships as their daily amusement and highest luxury, must generally, I think (though not always), be prompted to the arduous task by uneasy feelings of their own, and supported through it by iron nerves. Their fortitude must be equal to their pity. I do not think Mr. Wilberforce a case in point in this argument. He is evidently a delicately-framed, nervous, sensitive man. I should suppose him to be a kind and affectionately disposed person in all the relations of life. His weakness is too quick a sense of reputation, a desire to have the good word of all men, a tendency to truckle to power and fawn on opinion. But there are some of these philanthropists that a physiognomist has hard work to believe in. They seem made of pasteboard, they look like mere machines: their benevolence may be said to go on rollers, and they are screwed to the sticking-place by the wheels and pulleys of humanity:

ON THE SPIRIT OF OBLIGATIONS

'If to their share some splendid virtues fall,
Look in their face, and you forget them all.'

They appear so much the creatures of the head and so little of the heart, they are so cold, so lifeless, so mechanical, so much governed by calculation, and so little by impulse, that it seems the toss-up of a halfpenny, a mere turn of a feather, whether such people should become a Granville Sharp, or a Hubert in 'King John,' a Howard, or a Sir Hudson Lowe!

'Charity covers a multitude of sins.' Wherever it is, there nothing can be wanting; wherever it is not, all else is vain. 'The meanest peasant on the bleakest mountain is not without a portion of it (says Sterne), he finds the lacerated lamb of another's flock,' &c. (See the passage in the *Sentimental Journey*.) I do not think education or circumstances can ever entirely eradicate this principle. Some professions may be supposed to blunt it, but it is perhaps more in appearance than in reality. Butchers are not allowed to sit on a jury for life and death; but probably this is a prejudice: if they have the *destructive organ* in an unusual degree of expansion, they vent their sanguinary inclinations on the brute creation; and besides, they look too jolly, rosy, and in good case (they and their wives), to harbour much cruelty in their dispositions. Neither would I swear that a man was humane, merely for abstaining from animal food. A tiger would not be a lamb, though it fed on milk. Surgeons are in general thought to be unfeeling, and steeled by custom to the sufferings of humanity. They may be so, as far as relates to broken bones and bruises, but not to other things. Nor are they necessarily so in their profession; for we find different degrees of callous insensibility in different individuals. Some practitioners have an evident delight in alarming the apprehensions and cutting off the limbs of their patients: these would have been ill-natured men in any situation in life, and merely make an excuse of their profession to indulge their natural ill-humour and brutality of temper. A surgeon who is fond of giving pain to those who consult him will not spare the feelings of his neighbours in other respects; has a tendency to probe other wounds besides those of the body; and is altogether a harsh and disagreeable character. A Jack-Ketch may be known to tie the fatal noose with trembling fingers; or a jailor may have a heart softer than the walls of his prison. There have been instances of highwaymen who were proverbially gentlemen. I have seen a Bow-street officer[1] (not but that the transition is ungracious and unjust) reading Racine, and following the recitation of Talma at the door of a room, which

[1] Lavender.

he was sent to guard. Police-magistrates, from the scenes they have to witness and the characters they come in contact with, may be supposed to lose the fine edge of delicacy and sensibility: yet they are not all alike, but differ, as one star differs from another in magnitude. One is as remarkable for mildness and lenity, as another is notorious for harshness and severity. The late Mr. Justice Fielding was a member of this profession, which (however little accordant with his own feelings) he made pleasant to those of others. He generally sent away the disputants in that unruly region, where he presided, tolerably satisfied. I have often seen him, escaped from the noisy repulsive scene, sunning himself in the adjoining walks of St. James's Park, and with mild aspect, and lofty but unwieldy mien, eyeing the verdant glades and lengthening vistas where perhaps his childhood loitered. He had a strong resemblance to his father, the immortal author of 'Tom Jones.' I never passed him, that I did not take off my hat to him in spirit. I could not help thinking of Parson Adams, of Booth and Amelia. I seemed to belong, by intellectual adoption, to the same family, and would willingly have acknowledged my obligations to the father to the son. He had something of the air of Colonel Bath. When young, he had very excellent prospects in the law, but neglected a brief sent him by the Attorney-General, in order to attend a glee-club, for which he had engaged to furnish a rondeau. This spoiled his fortune. A man whose object is to please himself, or to keep his word to his friends, is the last man to thrive at court. Yet he looked serene and smiling to his latest breath, conscious of the goodness of his own heart, and of not having sullied a name that had thrown a light upon humanity!

There are different modes of obligation, and different avenues to our gratitude and favour. A man may lend his countenance who will not part with his money, and open his mind to us who will not draw out his purse. How many ways are there, in which our peace may be assailed, besides actual want! How many comforts do we stand in need of, besides meat and drink and clothing! Is it nothing to 'administer to a mind diseased'—to heal a wounded spirit? After all other difficulties are removed, we still want some one to bear with our infirmities, to impart our confidence to, to encourage us in our *hobbies* (nay, to get up and ride behind us) and to like us with all our faults. True friendship is self-love at second-hand; where, as in a flattering mirror, we may see our virtues magnified and our errors softened, and where we may fancy our opinion of ourselves confirmed by an impartial and faithful witness. He (of all the world) creeps the closest in our bosoms, into our

favour and esteem, who thinks of us most nearly as we do of ourselves. Such a one is indeed the pattern of a friend, another self —and our gratitude for the blessing is as sincere, as it is hollow in most other cases! This is one reason why entire friendship is scarcely to be found, except in love. There is a hardness and severity in our judgments of one another; the spirit of competition also intervenes, unless where there is too great an inequality of pretension or difference of taste to admit of mutual sympathy and respect; but a woman's vanity is interested in making the object of her choice the God of her idolatry; and in the intercourse with that sex, there is the finest balance and reflection of opposite and answering excellences imaginable! It is in the highest spirit of the religion of love in the female breast, that Lord Byron has put that beautiful apostrophe into the mouth of Anah, in speaking of her angel-lover (alas! are not the sons of men too, when they are deified in the hearts of women, only 'a little lower than the angels?')

> 'And when I think that his immortal wings
> Shall one day hover o'er the sepulchre
> Of the poor child of clay, that so adored him,
> As he adored the Highest, death becomes
> Less terrible!'

This is a dangerous string, which I ought never to touch upon; but the shattered cords vibrate of themselves!

The difference of age, of situation in life, and an absence of all considerations of business have, I apprehend, something of the same effect in producing a refined and abstracted friendship. The person, whose doors I enter with most pleasure, and quit with most regret, never did me the smallest favour. I once did him an uncalled-for service, and we nearly quarrelled about it. If I were in the utmost distress, I should just as soon think of asking his assistance, as of stopping a person on the highway. Practical benevolence is not his *forte*. He leaves the profession of that to others. His habits, his theory are against it as idle and vulgar. His hand is closed, but what of that? His eye is ever open, and reflects the universe: his silver accents, beautiful, venerable as his silver hairs, but not scanted, flow as a river. I never ate or drank in his house; nor do I know or care how the flies or spiders fare in it, or whether a mouse can get a living. But I know that I can get there what I get nowhere else—a welcome, as if one was expected to drop in just at that moment, a total absence of all respect of persons and of airs of self-consequence, endless topics of discourse, refined thoughts, made more striking by ease and simplicity of manner—the husk, the shell

of humanity is left at the door, and the spirit, mellowed by time, resides within! All you have to do is to sit and listen; and it is like hearing one of Titian's faces speak. To think of worldly matters is a profanation, like that of the money-changers in the Temple; or it is to regard the bread and wine of the Sacrament with carnal eyes. We enter the enchanter's cell, and converse with the divine inhabitant. To have this privilege always at hand, and to be circled by that spell whenever we chuse, with an '*Enter Sessami*,' is better than sitting at the lower end of the tables of the Great, than eating awkwardly from gold plate, than drinking fulsome toasts, or being thankful for gross favours, and gross insults!

Few things tend more to alienate friendship than a want of punctuality in our engagements. I have known the breach of a promise to dine or sup break up more than one intimacy. A disappointment of this kind rankles in the mind—it cuts up our pleasures (those rare events in human life, which ought not to be wantonly sported with!) —it not only deprives us of the expected gratification, but it renders us unfit for, and out of humour with, every other; it makes us think our society not worth having, which is not the way to make us delighted with our own thoughts; it lessens our self-esteem, and destroys our confidence in others; and having leisure on our hands (by being thus left alone) and sufficient provocation withal, we employ it in ripping up the faults of the acquaintance who has played us this slippery trick, and in forming resolutions to pick a quarrel with him the very first opportunity we can find. I myself once declined an invitation to meet Talma, who was an admirer of Shakespear, and who idolized Buonaparte, to keep an appointment with a person who had *forgot* it! One great art of women, who pretend to manage their husbands and keep them to themselves, is to contrive some excuse for breaking their engagements with friends, for whom they entertain any respect, or who are likely to have any influence over them.

There is, however, a class of persons who have a particular satisfaction in falsifying your expectations of pleasure in their society, who make appointments for no other ostensible purpose than *not to keep them*; who think their ill-behaviour gives them an air of superiority over you, instead of placing them at your mercy; and who, in fact, in all their overtures of condescending kindness towards you, treat you exactly as if there was no such person in the world. Friendship is with them a *mono-drama*, in which they play the principal and sole part. They must needs be very imposing or amusing characters to surround themselves with a circle of friends, who find that they are to be mere cyphers. The egotism would in such instances be

offensive and intolerable, if its very excess did not render it entertaining. Some individuals carry this hard, unprincipled, reckless unconsciousness of every thing but themselves and their own purposes to such a pitch, that they may be compared to *automata*, whom you never expect to consult your feelings or alter their movements out of complaisance to others. They are wound up to a certain point, by an internal machinery which you do not very well comprehend; but if they perform their accustomed evolutions so as to excite your wonder or laughter, it is all very well, you do not quarrel with them, but look on at the *pantomime* of friendship while it lasts or is agreeable.

There are (I may add here) a happy few, whose manner is so engaging and delightful, that injure you how they will, they cannot offend you. They rob, ruin, ridicule you, and you cannot find in your heart to say a word against them. The late Mr. Sheridan was a man of this kind. He *could not* make enemies. If any one came to request the repayment of a loan from him, he borrowed more. A cordial shake of his hand was a receipt in full for all demands. He could 'coin his *smile* for drachmas,' cancelled bonds with *bon mots*, and gave jokes in discharge of a bill. A friend of his said, 'If I pull off my hat to him in the street, it costs me fifty pounds, and if he speaks to me, it's a hundred!'

Only one other reflection occurs to me on this subject. I used to think better of the world than I do. I thought its great fault, its original sin, was barbarous ignorance and want, which would be cured by the diffusion of civilization and letters. But I find (or fancy I do) that as selfishness is the vice of unlettered periods and nations, envy is the bane of more refined and intellectual ones. Vanity springs out of the grave of sordid self-interest. Men were formerly ready to cut one another's throats about the gross means of subsistence, and now they are ready to do it about reputation. The worst is, you are no better off, if you fail than if you succeed. You are despised if you do not excel others, and hated if you do. Abuse or praise equally weans your friends from you. We cannot bear eminence in our own department or pursuit, and think it an impertinence in any other. Instead of being delighted with the proofs of excellence and the admiration paid to it, we are mortified with it, thrive only by the defeat of others, and live on the carcase of mangled reputation. By being tried by an *ideal* standard of vanity and affectation, real objects and common people become odious or insipid. Instead of being raised, all is prostituted, degraded, vile. Every thing is reduced to this feverish, importunate, harassing state. I'm heartily sick of it, and I'm sure I have reason if any one has.

ESSAY IX

ON THE OLD AGE OF ARTISTS

Mr. Nollekens died the other day at the age of eighty, and left 240,000 pounds behind him, and the name of one of our best English sculptors. There was a great scramble among the legatees, a codicil to a will with large bequests unsigned, and that last triumph of the dead or dying over those who survive—hopes raised and defeated without a possibility of retaliation, or the smallest use in complaint. The king was at first said to be left residuary legatee. This would have been a fine instance of romantic and gratuitous homage to Majesty, in a man who all his life-time could never be made to comprehend the abstract idea of the distinction of ranks or even of persons. He would go up to the Duke of York, or Prince of Wales (in spite of warning), take them familiarly by the button like common acquaintance, ask them *how their father did*; and express pleasure at hearing he was well, saying, 'when he was gone, we should never get such another.' He once, when the old king was sitting to him for his bust, fairly stuck a pair of compasses into his nose to measure the distance from the upper lip to the forehead, as if he had been measuring a block of marble. His late Majesty laughed heartily at this, and was amused to find that there was a person in the world, ignorant of that vast interval which separated him from every other man. Nollekens, with all his loyalty, merely liked the man, and cared nothing about the king (which was one of those *mixed modes*, as Mr. Locke calls them, of which he had no more idea than if he had been one of the cream-coloured horses)—handled him like so much common clay, and had no other notion of the matter, but that it was his business to make the best bust of him he possibly could, and to set about in the regular way. There was something in this plainness and simplicity that savoured perhaps of the hardness and dryness of his art, and of his own peculiar severity of manner. He conceived that one man's head differed from another's only as it was a better or worse subject for modelling, that a bad bust was not made into a good one by being stuck upon a pedestal, or by any painting or varnishing, and that by whatever name he was called, '*a man 's a man for a' that.*' A sculptor's ideas must, I should guess, be somewhat rigid and inflexible, like the materials in which he works. Besides, Nollekens's style was comparatively hard and edgy. He had as much truth and character,

but none of the polished graces or transparent softness of Chantry. He had more of the rough, plain, downright honesty of his art. It seemed to be his character. Mr. Northcote was once complimenting him on his acknowledged superiority—'Ay, *you* made the best busts of any body!' 'I don't know about that,' said the other, his eyes (though their orbs were quenched) smiling with a gleam of smothered delight—'I only know I always tried to make them as like as I could!'

I saw this eminent and singular person one morning in Mr. Northcote's painting-room. He had then been for some time blind, and had been obliged to lay aside the exercise of his profession; but he still took a pleasure in designing groups, and in giving directions to others for executing them. He and Northcote made a remarkable pair. He sat down on a low stool (from being rather fatigued), rested with both hands on a stick, as if he clung to the solid and tangible, had an habitual twitch in his limbs and motions, as if catching himself in the act of going too far in chiselling a lip or a dimple in a chin; was *bolt*-upright, with features hard and square, but finely cut, a hooked nose, thin lips, an indented forehead; and the defect in his sight completed his resemblance to one of his own masterly busts. He seemed, by time and labour, to 'have *wrought* himself to stone.' Northcote stood by his side—all air and spirit, stooping down to speak to him. The painter was in a loose morning-gown, with his back to the light; his face was like a pale fine piece of colouring; and his eye came out and glanced through the twilight of the past, like an old eagle looking from its eyrie in the clouds. In a moment they had lighted from the top of Mount Cenis in the Vatican—

> 'As when a vulture on Imaus bred
> Flies tow'rds the springs
> Of Ganges and Hydaspes, Indian streams,'

these two fine old men lighted with winged thoughts on the banks of the Tiber, and there bathed and drank of the spirit of their youth. They talked of Titian and Bernini; and Northcote mentioned, that when Roubilliac came back from Rome, after seeing the works of the latter, and went to look at his own in Westminster Abbey, he said—'By G—d, they looked like tobacco-pipes.'

They then recalled a number of anecdotes of Day (a fellow-student of theirs), of Barry and Fuseli. Sir Joshua, and Burke, and Johnson were talked of. The names of these great sons of memory were in the room, and they almost seemed to answer to them—Genius and Fame flung a spell into the air,

> 'And by the force of blear illusion,
> Had drawn me on to my confusion,'

had I not been long ere this *siren-proof*! It is delightful, though painful, to hear two veterans in art thus talking over the adventures and studies of their youth, when one feels that they are not quite mortal, that they have one imperishable part about them, and that they are conscious, as they approach the farthest verge of humanity in friendly intercourse and tranquil decay, that they have done something that will live after them. The consolations of religion apart, this is perhaps the only salve that takes out the sting of that sore evil, Death; and by lessening the impatience and alarm at his approach, often tempts him to prolong the term of his delay.

It has been remarked that artists, or at least academicians, live long. It is but a short while ago that Northcote, Nollekens, West, Flaxman, Cosway, and Fuseli were all living at the same time, in good health and spirits, without any diminution of faculties, all of them having long past their grand climacteric, and attained to the highest reputation in their several departments. From these striking examples, the diploma of a Royal Academician seems to be a grant of a longer lease of life, among its other advantages. In fact, it is tantamount to the conferring a certain reputation in his profession and a competence on any man, and thus supplies the wants of the body and sets his mind at ease. Artists in general (poor devils!), I am afraid, are not a long-lived race. They break up commonly about forty, their spirits giving way with the disappointment of their hopes of excellence, or the want of encouragement for that which they have attained, their plans disconcerted, and their affairs irretrievable; and in this state of mortification and embarrassment (more or less prolonged and aggravated) they are either starved or else drink themselves to death. But your Academician is quite a different sort of person. He 'bears a charmed life, that must not yield' to duns, or critics, or patrons. He is free of Parnassus, and claims all the immunities of fame in his life-time. He has but to paint (as the sun has but to shine), to baffle envious maligners. He has but to send his pictures to the Exhibition at Somerset-House, in order to have them hung up: he has but to dine once a year with the Academy, the Nobility, the Cabinet-Minister, and the Members of the Royal Family, in order not to want a dinner all the rest of the year. Shall hunger come near the man that has feasted with princes—shall a bailiff tap the shoulder on which a Marquis has familiarly leaned, that has been dubbed with knighthood? No, even the fell Serjeant Death stands as it were aloof, and he enjoys a kind of premature immortality in recorded honours and endless labours. Oh! what golden hours are his! In the short days of winter he husbands time; the long evenings of summer still find him employed! He

paints on, and takes no thought for to-morrow. All is right in that respect. His bills are regularly paid, his drafts are duly honoured. He has exercise for his body, employment for his mind in his profession, and without ever stirring out of his painting-room. He studies as much of other things as he pleases. He goes into the best company, or talks with his sitters—attends at the Academy Meetings, and enters into their intrigues and cabals, or stays at home, and enjoys the *otium cum dignitate*. If he is fond of reputation, Fame watches him at work, and weaves a woof, like Iris, over his head—if he is fond of money, Plutus digs a mine under his feet. Whatever he touches becomes gold. He is paid half-price before he begins; and commissions pour in upon commissions. His portraits are like, and his historical pieces fine; for to question the talents or success of a Royal Academician is to betray your own want of taste. Or if his pictures are not quite approved, he is an agreeable man, and converses well. Or he is a person of elegant accomplishments, dresses well, and is an ornament to a private circle. A man is not an Academician for nothing. 'His life spins round on its soft axle;' and in a round of satisfied desires and pleasing avocations, without any of the *wear and tear* of thought or business, there seems no reason why it should not run smoothly on to its last sand!

Of all the Academicians, the painters, or persons I have ever known, Mr. Northcote is the most to my taste. It may be said of him truly,

> 'Age cannot wither, nor custom stale
> His infinite variety.'

Indeed, it is not possible he should become tedious, since, even if he repeats the same thing, it appears quite new from his manner, that breathes new life into it, and from his eye, that is as fresh as the morning. How you hate any one who tells the same story or anticipates a remark of his—it seems so coarse and vulgar, so dry and inanimate! There is something like injustice in this preference—but no! it is a tribute to the spirit that is in the man. Mr. Northcote's manner is completely *extempore*. It is just the reverse of Mr. Canning's oratory. All his thoughts come upon him unawares, and for this reason they surprise and delight you, because they have evidently the same effect upon his mind. There is the same unconsciousness in his conversation that has been pointed out in Shakespear's dialogues; or you are startled with one observation after another, as when the mist gradually withdraws from a landscape and unfolds objects one by one. His figure is small, shadowy, emaciated; but you think only of his face, which is fine and expressive.

His body is out of the question. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the *naiveté*, and unaffected, but delightful ease of the way in which he goes on—now touching upon a picture—now looking for his snuff-box—now alluding to some book he has been reading—now returning to his favourite art. He seems just as if he was by himself or in the company of his own thoughts, and makes you feel quite at home. If it is a Member of Parliament, or a beautiful woman, or a child, or a young artist that drops in, it makes no difference; he enters into conversation with them in the same unconstrained manner, as if they were inmates in his family. Sometimes you find him sitting on the floor, like a school-boy at play, turning over a set of old prints; and I was pleased to hear him say the other day, coming to one of some men putting off in a boat from a ship-wreck—'*That* is the grandest and most original thing I ever did!' This was not egotism, but had all the beauty of truth and sincerity. The print was indeed a noble and spirited design. The circumstance from which it was taken happened to Captain Englefield and his crew. He told Northcote the story, sat for his own head, and brought the men from Wapping to sit for theirs; and these he had arranged into a formal composition, till one Jeffrey, a conceited but clever artist of that day, called in upon him, and said, 'Oh! that common-place thing will never do, it is like West; you should throw them into an action something like this.'—Accordingly, the head of the boat was reared up like a sea-horse riding the waves, and the elements put into commotion, and when the painter looked at it the last thing as he went out of his room in the dusk of the evening, he said that 'it frightened him.' He retained the expression in the faces of the men nearly as they sat to him. It is very fine, and truly English; and being natural, it was easily made into history. There is a portrait of a young gentleman striving to get into the boat, while the crew are pushing him off with their oars; but at last he prevailed with them by his perseverance and entreaties to take him in. They had only time to throw a bag of biscuits into the boat before the ship went down; which they divided into a biscuit a day for each man, dipping them into water which they collected by holding up their handkerchiefs in the rain and squeezing it into a bottle. They were out sixteen days in the Atlantic, and got ashore at some place in Spain, where the great difficulty was to prevent them from eating too much at once, so as to recover gradually. Captain Englefield observed that he suffered more afterwards than at the time—that he had horrid dreams of falling down precipices for a long while after—that in the boat they told merry stories, and kept up one another's spirits as well as they

could, and on some complaint being made of their distressed situation, the young gentleman who had been admitted into their crew remarked, 'Nay, we are not so badly off neither, we are not come to *eating* one another yet!'—Thus, whatever is the subject of discourse, the scene is revived in his mind, and every circumstance brought before you without affectation or effort, just as it happened. It might be called *picture-talking*. He has always some pat allusion or anecdote. A young engraver came into his room the other day, with a print which he had put into the crown of his hat, in order not to crumple it, and he said it had been nearly blown away several times in passing along the street. 'You put me in mind,' said Northcote, 'of a bird-catcher at Plymouth, who used to put the birds he had caught into his hat to bring them home, and one day meeting my father in the road, he pulled off his hat to make him a low bow, and all the birds flew away!' Sometimes Mr. Northcote gets to the top of a ladder to paint a palm-tree or to finish a sky in one of his pictures; and in this situation he listens very attentively to any thing you tell him. I was once mentioning some strange inconsistencies of our modern poets; and on coming to one that exceeded the rest, he descended the steps of the ladder one by one, laid his pallet and brushes deliberately on the ground, and coming up to me, said—'You don't say so, it's the very thing I should have supposed of them: yet these are the men that speak against Pope and Dryden.' Never any sarcasms were so fine, so cutting, so careless as his. The grossest things from his lips seem an essence of refinement: the most refined became more so than ever. Hear him talk of Pope's Epistle to Jervas, and repeat the lines—

> 'Yet should the Graces all thy figures place,
> And breathe an air divine on every face;
> Yet should the Muses bid my numbers roll
> Strong as their charms, and gentle as their soul,
> With Zeuxis' Helen thy Bridgewater vie,
> And these be sung till Granville's Myra die:
> Alas! how little from the grave we claim;
> Thou but preserv'st a face, and I a name.'

Or let him speak of Boccacio and his story of Isabella and her pot of basil, in which she kept her lover's head and watered it with her tears, 'and how it grew, and it grew, and it grew,' and you see his own eyes glisten, and the leaves of the basil-tree tremble to his faltering accents!

Mr. Fuseli's conversation is more striking and extravagant, but

less pleasing and natural than Mr. Northcote's. He deals in paradoxes and caricatures. He talks allegories and personifications, as he paints them. You are sensible of effort without any repose—no careless pleasantry—no traits of character or touches from nature—every thing is laboured or overdone. His ideas are gnarled, hard, and distorted, like his features—his theories stalking and straddle-legged, like his gait—his projects aspiring and gigantic, like his gestures—his performance uncouth and dwarfish, like his person. His pictures are also like himself, with eye-balls of stone stuck in rims of tin, and muscles twisted together like ropes or wires. Yet Fuseli is undoubtedly a man of genius, and capable of the most wild and grotesque combinations of fancy. It is a pity that he ever applied himself to painting, which must always be reduced to the test of the senses. He is a little like Dante or Ariosto, perhaps; but no more like Michael Angelo, Raphael, or Correggio, than I am. Nature, he complains, puts him out. Yet he can laugh at artists who 'paint ladies with iron lap-dogs;' and he describes the great masters of old in words or lines full of truth, and glancing from a pen or tongue of fire. I conceive any person would be more struck with Mr. Fuseli at first sight, but would wish to visit Mr. Northcote oftener. There is a bold and startling outline in his style of talking, but not the delicate finishing or bland tone that there is in that of the latter. Whatever there is harsh or repulsive about him is, however, in a great degree carried off by his animated foreign accent and broken English, which give character where there is none, and soften its asperities where it is too abrupt and violent.

Compared to either of these artists, West (the late President of the Royal Academy) was a thoroughly mechanical and *common-place* person—a man 'of no mark or likelihood.' He too was small, thin, but with regular well-formed features, and a precise, sedate, self-satisfied air. This, in part, arose from the conviction in his own mind that he was the greatest painter (and consequently the greatest man) in the world: kings and nobles were common every-day folks, but there was but one West in the many-peopled globe. If there was any one individual with whom he was inclined to share the palm of undivided superiority, it was with Buonaparte. When Mr. West had painted a picture, he thought it was perfect. He had no idea of any thing in the art but rules, and these he exactly conformed to; so that, according to his theory, what he did was quite right. He conceived of painting as a mechanical or scientific process, and had no more doubt of a face or a group in one of his high ideal compositions being what it ought to be, than a carpenter has that he has drawn a line straight with a ruler and a piece of chalk, or than a

mathematician has that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones.

When Mr. West walked through his gallery, the result of fifty years' labour, he saw nothing, either on the right or the left, to be added or taken away. The account he gave of his own pictures, which might seem like ostentation or rhodomontade, had a sincere and infantine simplicity in it. When some one spoke of his *St. Paul shaking off the serpent from his arm*, (at Greenwich Hospital, I believe), he said, 'A little burst of genius, sir!' West was one of those happy mortals who had not an idea of any thing beyond himself or his own actual powers and knowledge. I once heard him say in a public room, that he thought he had quite as good an idea of Athens from reading the Travelling Catalogues of the place, as if he lived there for years. I believe this was strictly true, and that he would have come away with the same slender, literal, unenriched idea of it as he went. Looking at a picture of Rubens, which he had in his possession, he said with great indifference, 'What a pity that this man wanted expression!' This natural self-complacency might be strengthened by collateral circumstances of birth and religion. West, as a native of America, might be supposed to own no superior in the Commonwealth of art: as a Quaker, he smiled with sectarian self-sufficiency at the objections that were made to his theory or practice in painting. He lived long in the firm persuasion of being one of the elect among the sons of Fame, and went to his final rest in the arms of Immortality! Happy error! Enviable old man!

Flaxman is another living and eminent artist, who is distinguished by success in his profession and by a prolonged and active old age. He is diminutive in person, like the others. I know little of him, but that he is an elegant sculptor, and a profound mystic. This last is a character common to many other artists in our days—Loutherbourg, Cosway, Blake, Sharp, Varley, &c.—who seem to relieve the literalness of their professional studies by voluntary excursions into the regions of the preternatural, pass their time between sleeping and waking, and whose ideas are like a stormy night, with the clouds driven rapidly across, and the blue sky and stars gleaming between!

Cosway is the last of these I shall mention. At that name I pause, and must be excused if I consecrate to him a *petit souvenir* in my best manner; for he was Fancy's child. What a fairy palace was his of specimens of art, antiquarianism, and *virtù*, jumbled all together in the richest disorder, dusty, shadowy, obscure, with much left to the imagination, (how different from the finical, polished, petty, modernised air of some Collections we have seen!) and with

copies of the old masters, cracked and damaged, which he touched and retouched with his own hand, and yet swore they were the genuine, the pure originals. All other collectors are fools to him: they go about with painful anxiety to find out the realities:—he *said* he had them—and in a moment made them of the breath of his nostrils and of the fumes of a lively imagination. His was the crucifix that Abelard prayed to—a lock of Eloisa's hair—the dagger with which Felton stabbed the Duke of Buckingham—the first finished sketch of the Jocunda—Titian's large colossal profile of Peter Aretine—a mummy of an Egyptian king—a feather of a phœnix—a piece of Noah's Ark. Were the articles authentic? What matter?—his faith in them was true. He was gifted with a *second-sight* in such matters: he believed whatever was incredible. Fancy bore sway in him; and so vivid were his impressions, that they included the substances of things in them. The agreeable and the true with him were one. He believed in Swedenborgianism—he believed in animal magnetism—he had conversed with more than one person of the Trinity—he could talk with his lady at Mantua through some fine vehicle of sense, as we speak to a servant down-stairs through a conduit-pipe. Richard Cosway was not the man to flinch from an *ideal* proposition. Once, at an Academy dinner, when some question was made whether the story of Lambert's Leap was true, he started up, and said it was; for he was the person that performed it:—he once assured me that the knee-pan of King James I. in the ceiling at Whitehall was nine feet across (he had measured it in concert with Mr. Cipriani, who was repairing the figures)—he could read in the Book of the Revelations without spectacles, and foretold the return of Buonaparte from Elba—and from St. Helena! His wife, the most lady-like of Englishwomen, being asked in Paris what sort of a man her husband was, made answer—'*Toujours riant, toujours gai.*' This was his character. He must have been of French extraction. His soul appeared to possess the life of a bird; and such was the jauntiness of his air and manner, that to see him sit to have his half-boots laced on, you would fancy (by the help of a figure) that, instead of a little withered elderly gentleman, it was Venus attired by the Graces. His miniatures and whole-length drawings were not merely fashionable—they were fashion itself. His imitations of Michael Angelo were not the thing. When more than ninety, he retired from his profession, and used to hold up the palsied hand that had painted lords and ladies for upwards of sixty years, and smiled, with unabated good-humour, at the vanity of human wishes. Take him with all his faults and follies, we scarce 'shall look upon his like again!'

Why should such persons ever die? It seems hard upon them and us! Care fixes no sting in their hearts, and their persons 'present no mark to the foe-man.' Death in them seizes upon living shadows. They scarce consume vital air: their gross functions are long at an end—they live but to paint, to talk or think. Is it that the vice of age, the miser's fault, gnaws them? Many of them are not afraid of death, but of coming to want; and having begun in poverty, are haunted with the idea that they shall end in it, and so die—*to save charges*. Otherwise, they might linger on for ever, and 'defy augury!'

ESSAY X

ON ENVY (A DIALOGUE)

H. I HAD a theory about Envy at one time, which I have partly given up of late—which was, that there was no such feeling, or that what is usually considered as envy or dislike of real merit is, more properly speaking, jealousy of false pretensions to it. I used to illustrate the argument by saying, that this was the reason we were not envious of the dead, because their merit was established beyond the reach of cavil or contradiction; whereas we are jealous and uneasy at sudden and upstart popularity, which wants the seal of time to confirm it, and which after all may turn out to be false and hollow. There is no danger that the testimony of ages should be reversed, and we add our suffrages to it with confidence, and even with enthusiasm. But we doubt reasonably enough, whether that which was applauded yesterday may not be condemned to-morrow; and are afraid of setting our names to a fraudulent claim to distinction. However satisfied we may be in our own minds, we are not sufficiently borne out by general opinion and sympathy to prevent certain misgivings and scruples on the subject. No one thinks, for instance, of denying the merit of Teniers in his particular style of art, and no one consequently thinks of envying him. The merit of Wilkie, on the contrary, was at first strongly contested, and there were other painters set up in opposition to him, till now that he has become a sort of *classic* in his way, he has ceased to be an object of envy or dislike, because no one doubts his real excellence, as far as it goes. He has no more than justice done him, and the mind never revolts at justice. It only rejects false or superficial claims to admiration, and is incensed to see the world take up with appearances, when they have no solid foundation to support them. We are not envious of

Rubens or Raphael, because their fame is a pledge of their genius: but if any one were to bring forward the highest living names as equal to these, it immediately sets the blood in a ferment, and we try to stifle the sense we have of their merits, not because they are new or modern, but because we are not sure they will ever be old. Could we be certain that posterity would sanction our award, we should grant it without scruple, even to an enemy and a rival.

N. That which you describe is not envy. Envy is when you hate and would destroy all excellence that you do not yourself possess. So they say that Raphael, after he had copied the figures on one of the antique vases, endeavoured to deface them; and Hoppner, it has been said, used to get pictures of Sir Joshua's into his possession, on purpose to paint them over and spoil them.

H. I do not believe the first, certainly. Raphael was too great a man, and with too fortunate a temper, to need or to wish to prop himself up on the ruins of others. As to Hoppner, he might perhaps think that there was no good reason for the preference given to Sir Joshua's portraits over his own, that his women of quality were the more airy and fashionable of the two, and might be tempted (once perhaps) in a fit of spleen, of caprice or impatience, to blot what was an eye-sore to himself from its old-fashioned, faded, dingy look, and at the same time dazzled others from the force of tradition and prejudice. Why, he might argue, should that old fellow run away with all the popularity even among those who (as he well knew) in their hearts preferred his own insipid, flaunting style to any other? Though it might be true that Sir Joshua was the greater painter, yet it was not true that Lords and Ladies thought so: he felt that he ought to be *their* favourite, and he might naturally hate what was continually *thrust in his dish*, and (as far as those about him were concerned) unjustly set over his head. Besides, Hoppner had very little of his own to rely on, and might wish, by destroying, to conceal the source from whence he had borrowed almost every thing.

N. Did you never feel envy?

H. Very little, I think. In truth, I am out of the way of it: for the only pretension, of which I am tenacious, is that of being a metaphysician; and there is so little attention paid to this subject to pamper one's vanity, and so little fear of losing that little from competition, that there is scarcely any room for envy here. One occupies the niche of eminence in which one places one's self, very quietly and contentedly! If I have ever felt this passion at all, it has been where some very paltry fellow has by trick and management contrived to obtain much more credit than he was entitled to. There was————, to whom I had a perfect antipathy. He was the antithesis of a man

of genius; and yet he did better, by mere dint of dulness, than many men of genius. This was intolerable. There was something in the man and in his manner, with which you could not possibly connect the idea of admiration, or of any thing that was not merely mechanical—

'His look made the still air cold.'

He repelled all sympathy and cordiality. What he did (though amounting only to mediocrity) was an insult on the understanding. It seemed that he should be able *to do nothing*; for he was nothing either in himself or in other people's idea of him! Mean actions or gross expressions too often unsettle one's theory of genius. We are unable as well as unwilling to connect the feeling of high intellect with low moral sentiment: the one is a kind of desecration of the other. I have for this reason been sometimes disposed to disparage Turner's fine landscapes, and be glad when he failed in his higher attempts, in order that my conception of the artist and his pictures might be more of a piece. This is not envy or an impatience of extraordinary merit, but an impatience of the incongruities in human nature, and of the drawbacks and stumbling-blocks in the way of our admiration of it. Who is there that admires the Author of Waverley more than I do? Who is there that despises Sir W***** S**** more? I do not like to think there should be a second instance of the same person's being

'The wisest, meanest of mankind—'

and should be heartily glad if the greatest genius of the age should turn out to be an honest man. The only thing that renders this *mis-alliance* between first-rate intellect and want of principle endurable is that such an extreme instance of it teaches us that great moral lesson of moderating our expectations of human perfection, and enlarging our indulgence for human infirmity.

N. You start off with an idea as usual, and torture the plain state of the case into a paradox. There may be some truth in what you suppose; but malice or selfishness is at the bottom of the severity of your criticism, not the love of truth or justice, though you may make it the pretext. You are more angry at Sir W***** S****'s success than at his servility. You would give yourself no trouble about his poverty of spirit, if he had not made a hundred thousand pounds by his writings. The sting lies there, though you may try to conceal it from yourself.

H. I do not think so. I hate the sight of the Duke of W********* for his foolish face, as much as for any thing else. I cannot believe that a great general is contained under such a paste-board vizor of a man. This, you'll say, is party spite, and rage at

his good fortune. I deny it. I always liked Lord Castlereagh for the gallant spirit that shone through his appearance; and his fine bust surmounted and crushed fifty orders that glittered beneath it. Nature seemed to have meant him for something better than he was. But in the other instance, Fortune has evidently played Nature a trick,

'To throw a cruel sunshine on a fool.'

N. The truth is, you were reconciled to Lord Castlereagh's face, and patronised his person, because you felt a sort of advantage over him in point of style. His blunders qualified his success; and you fancied you could take his speeches in pieces, whereas you could not undo the battles that the other had won.

H. So I have been accused of denying the merits of Pitt, from political dislike and prejudice: but who is there that has praised Burke more than I have? It is a subject I am never weary of, because I feel it.

N. You mean, because he is dead, and is now little talked of; and you think you show superior discernment and liberality by praising him. If there was a *Burke-Club*, you would say nothing about him. You deceive yourself as to your own motives, and weave a wrong theory out of them for human nature. The love of distinction is the ruling passion of the human mind; we grudge whatever draws off attention from ourselves to others; and all our actions are but different contrivances, either by sheer malice or affected liberality, to keep it to ourselves or share it with others. Goldsmith was jealous even of beauty in the other sex. When the people at Amsterdam gathered round the balcony to look at the Miss Hornecks, he grew impatient, and said peevishly, 'There are places where I also am admired.' It may be said—What could their beauty have to do with his reputation? No: it could not tend to lessen it, but it drew admiration from himself to them. So Mr. C****r, the other day, when he was at the Academy dinner, made himself conspicuous by displaying the same feeling. He found fault with every thing, *damned* all the pictures—landscapes, portraits, busts, nothing pleased him; and not contented with this, he then fell foul of the art itself, which he treated as a piece of idle foolery, and said that Raphael had thrown away his time in doing what was not worth the trouble. This, besides being insincere, was a great breach of good-manners, which none but a low-bred man would be guilty of; but he felt his own consequence annoyed; he saw a splendid exhibition of art, a splendid dinner set out, the Nobility, the Cabinet-Ministers, the branches of the Royal Family invited to it; the most eminent professors were there present; it was a triumph and a celebration of art, a dazzling proof of the

height to which it had attained in this country, and of the esteem in which it was held. He felt that he played a very subordinate part in all this; and in order to relieve his own wounded vanity, he was determined (as he thought) to mortify that of others. He wanted to make himself of more importance than any body else, by trampling on Raphael and on the art itself. It was ridiculous and disgusting, because every one saw though the motive; so that he defeated his own object.

H. And he would have avoided this exposure, if with all his conceit and ill-humour, he had had the smallest taste for the art, or perception of the beauties of Raphael. He has just knowledge enough of drawing to make a whole length sketch of Buonaparte, verging on caricature, yet not palpably outraging probability; so that it looked like a fat, stupid, *common-place* man, or a flattering likeness of some legitimate monarch—he had skill, cunning, servility enough to do this with his own hand, and to circulate a print of it with zealous activity, as an indirect means of degrading him in appearance to that low level to which fortune had once raised him in reality. But the man who could do this deliberately, and with satisfaction to his own nature, was not the man to understand Raphael, and might slander him or any other, the greatest of earth's born, without injuring or belying any feeling of admiration or excellence in his own breast; for no such feeling had ever entered there.

N. Come, this is always the way. Now you are growing personal. Why do you so constantly let your temper get the better of your reason?

H. Because I hate a hypocrite, a time-server, and a slave. But to return to the question, and say no more about this '*talking potatoe*'[1] —I do not think that, except in circumstances of peculiar aggravation, or of extraordinary ill-temper and moroseness of disposition, any one who has a thorough feeling of excellence has a delight in gainsaying it. The excellence that we feel, we participate in as if it were our own—it becomes ours by transfusion of mind—it is instilled into our hearts—it mingles with our blood. We are unwilling to allow merit, because we are unable to perceive it. But to be convinced of it, is to be ready to acknowledge and pay homage to it. Illiberality or narrowness of feeling is a narrowness of taste, a want of proper *tact*. A bigotted and exclusive spirit is real blindness to all excellence but our own, or that of some particular school or sect. I think I can give an instance of this in some friends of mine, on whom you will be disposed to have no more mercy than I have on

[1] Mr. C****r made his first appearance in this country as a hack-writer, and received this surname from the classic lips of Mr. Cumberland.

notions on the subject of his art, and supply his defects; and did not, like some artists, measure all possible excellence by his own actual deficiencies. He thus improved and learned something daily. Others have lost their way by setting out with a pragmatical notion of their own self-sufficiency, and have never advanced a single step beyond their first crude conceptions. Fuseli was to blame in this respect. He did not want capacity or enthusiasm, but he had an over-weening opinion of his own peculiar acquirements. Speaking of Vandyke, he said he would not go across the way to see the finest portrait he had ever painted. He asked—'What is it but a little bit of colour?' Sir Joshua said, on hearing this—'Aye, he'll live to repent it.' And he has lived to repent it. With that little bit added to his own heap, he would have been a much greater painter, and a happier man.

H. Yes: but I doubt whether he could have added it in practice. I think the indifference, in the first instance, arises from the want of taste and capacity. If Fuseli had possessed an eye for colour, he would not have despised it in Vandyke. But we reduce others to the limits of our own capacity. We think little of what we cannot do, and envy it where we imagine that it meets with disproportioned admiration from others. A dull, pompous, and obscure writer has been heard to exclaim, 'That *dunce*, Wordsworth!' This was excusable in one who is utterly without feeling for any objects in nature, but those which would make splendid furniture for a drawing-room, or any sentiment of the human heart, but that with which a slave looks up to a despot, or a despot looks down upon a slave. This contemptuous expression was an effusion of spleen and impatience at the idea that there should be any who preferred Wordsworth's descriptions of a daisy or a linnet's nest to his *auctioneer*-poetry about curtains, and palls, and sceptres, and precious stones: but had Wordsworth, in addition to his original sin of simplicity and true genius, been a popular writer, his contempt would have turned into hatred. As it is, he tolerates his *idle nonsense*: there is a link of friendship in mutual political servility; and besides, he has a fellow-feeling with him, as one of those writers of whose merits the world have not been fully sensible. Mr. Croley set out with high pretensions, and had some idea of rivalling Lord Byron in a certain lofty, imposing style of versification: but he is probably by this time convinced that mere constitutional *hauteur* as ill supplies the place of elevation of genius, as of the pride of birth; and that the public know how to distinguish between a string of gaudy, painted, turgid phrases, and the vivid creations of fancy, or touching delineations of the human heart.

N. What did you say the writer's name was?

H. Croley. He is one of the Royal Society of Authors.

N. I never heard of him. Is he an imitator of Lord Byron, did you say?

H. I am afraid neither he nor Lord Byron would have it thought so.

N. Such imitators do all the mischief, and bring real genius into disrepute. This is in some measure an excuse for those who have endeavoured to disparage Pope and Dryden. We have had a surfeit of imitations of them. Poetry, in the hands of a set of mechanic scribblers, had become such a tame, mawkish thing, that we could endure it no longer, and our impatience of the abuse of a good thing transferred itself to the original source. It was this which enabled Wordsworth and the rest to raise up a new school (or to attempt it) on the ruins of Pope; because a race of writers had succeeded him without one particle of his wit, sense, and delicacy, and the world were tired of their everlasting *sing-song* and *namby-pamby*. People were disgusted at hearing the faults of Pope (the part most easily imitated) cried up as his greatest excellence, and were willing to take refuge from such nauseous cant in any novelty.

H. What you now observe comes nearly to my account of the matter. Sir Andrew Wylie will sicken people of the Author of Waverley. It was but the other day that some one was proposing that there should be a Society formed for not reading the Scotch Novels. But it is not the excellence of that fine writer that we are tired of, or revolt at, but vapid imitations or catch-penny repetitions of himself. Even the quantity of them has an obvious tendency to lead to this effect. It lessens, instead of increasing our admiration: for it seems to be an evidence that there is no difficulty in the task, and leads us to suspect something like trick or deception in their production. We have not been used to look upon works of genius as of the *fungus* tribe. Yet these are so. We had rather doubt our own taste than ascribe such a superiority of genius to another, that it works without consciousness or effort, executes the labour of a life in a few weeks, writes faster than the public can read, and scatters the rich materials of thought and feeling like so much chaff.

N. Aye, there it is. We had rather do any thing than acknowledge the merit of another, if we have any possible excuse or evasion to help it. Depend upon it, you are glad Sir Walter Scott is a Tory —because it gives you an opportunity of qualifying your involuntary admiration of him. You would be sorry indeed if he were what you call an *honest man*! Envy is like a viper coiled up at the bottom of the heart, ready to spring upon and poison whatever approaches it.

We live upon the vices, the imperfections, the misfortunes, and disappointments of others, as our natural food. We cannot bear a superior or an equal. Even our pretended cordial admiration is only a subterfuge of our vanity. By raising one, we proportionably lower and mortify others. Our self-love may perhaps be taken by surprise and thrown off its guard by novelty; but it soon recovers itself, and begins to cool in its warmest expressions, and find every possible fault. Ridicule, for this reason, is sure to prevail over truth, because the malice of mankind thrown into the scale gives the casting-weight. We have one succession of authors, of painters, of favourites, after another, whom we hail in their turns, because they operate as a diversion to one another, and relieve us of the galling sense of the superiority of any one individual for any length of time. By changing the object of our admiration, we secretly persuade ourselves that there is no such thing as excellence. It is that which we hate above all things. It is the worm that gnaws us, that never dies. The mob shout when a king or a conqueror appears: they would take him and tear him in pieces, but that he is the scape-goat of their pride and vanity, and makes all other men appear like a herd of slaves and cowards. Instead of a thousand equals, we compound for one superior, and allay all heart-burnings and animosities among ourselves, by giving the palm *to the least worthy*. This is the secret of monarchy.—Loyalty is not the love of kings, but hatred and jealousy of mankind. A lacquey rides behind his lord's coach, and feels no envy of his master. Why? because he looks down and laughs, in his borrowed finery, at the ragged rabble below. Is it not so in our profession? What Academician eats his dinner in peace, if a rival sits near him; if his own are not the most admired pictures in the room; or, in that case, if there are any others that are at all admired, and divide distinction with him? Is not every artifice used to place the pictures of other artists in the worst light? Do they not go there after their performances are hung up, and try to *paint one another out*? What is the case among players? Does not a favourite actor threaten to leave the stage, as soon as a new candidate for public favour is taken the least notice of? Would not a Manager of a theatre (who has himself pretensions) sooner see it burnt down, than that it should be saved from ruin and lifted into the full tide of public prosperity and favour, by the efforts of one whom he conceives to have supplanted himself in the popular opinion? Do we not see an author, who has had a tragedy damned, sit at the play every night of a new performance for years after, in the hopes of gaining a new companion in defeat? Is it not an indelible offence to a picture-collector and patron of the arts, to hint that another has a fine head in his collec-

tion? Will any merchant in the city allow another to be worth a *plum*? What wit will applaud a *bon mot* by a rival? He sits uneasy and out of countenance, till he has made another, which he thinks will make the company forget the first. Do women ever allow beauty in others? Observe the people in a country-town, and see how they look at those who are better dressed than themselves; listen to the talk in country-places, and mind if it is composed of any thing but slanders, gossip, and lies.

H. But don't you yourself admire Sir Joshua Reynolds?

N. Why, yes: I think I have no envy myself, and yet I have sometimes caught myself at it. I don't know that I do not admire Sir Joshua merely as a screen against the reputation of bad pictures.

H. Then, at any rate, what I say is true: we envy the good less than we do the bad.

N. I do not think so; and am not sure that Sir Joshua himself did not admire Michael Angelo to get rid of the superiority of Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt, which pressed closer on him, and 'galled his kibe more.'

H. I should not think that at all unlikely; for I look upon Sir Joshua as rather a spiteful man, and always thought he could have little real feeling for the works of Michael Angelo or Raphael, which he extolled so highly, or he would not have been insensible to their effect the first time he ever beheld them.

N. He liked Sir Peter Lely better.

ESSAY XI

ON SITTING FOR ONE'S PICTURE

THERE is a pleasure in sitting for one's picture, which many persons are not aware of. People are coy on this subject at first, coquet with it, and pretend not to like it, as is the case with other venial indulgences, but they soon get over their scruples, and become resigned to their fate. There is a conscious vanity in it; and vanity is the *aurum potabile* in all our pleasures, the true *elixir* of human life. The sitter at first affects an air of indifference, throws himself into a slovenly or awkward position, like a clown when he goes a courting for the first time, but gradually recovers himself, attempts an attitude, and calls up his best looks, the moment he receives intimation that there is something about him that will do for a picture. The beggar in the street is proud to have his picture painted, and would almost

sit for nothing: the finest lady in the land is as fond of sitting to a favourite artist as of seating herself before her looking-glass; and the more so, as the glass in this case is sensible of her charms, and does all it can to fix or heighten them. Kings lay aside their crowns to sit for their portraits, and poets their laurels to sit for their busts! I am sure, my father had as little vanity, and as little love for the art as most persons: yet when he had sat to me a few times (now some twenty years ago), he grew evidently uneasy when it was a fine day, that is, when the sun shone into the room, so that we could not paint; and when it became cloudy, began to bustle about, and ask me if I was not getting ready. Poor old room! Does the sun still shine into thee, or does Hope fling its colours round thy walls, gaudier than the rainbow? No, never, while thy oak-pannels endure, will they enclose such fine movements of the brain as passed through mine, when the fresh hues of nature gleamed from the canvas, and my heart silently breathed the names of Rembrandt and Correggio! Between my father's love of sitting and mine of painting, we hit upon a tolerable likeness at last; but the picture is cracked and gone; and *Megilp* (that bane of the English school) has destroyed as fine an old Nonconformist head as one could hope to see in these degenerate times.

The fact is, that the having one's picture painted is like the creation of another self; and that is an idea, of the repetition or reduplication of which no man is ever tired, to the thousandth reflection. It has been said that lovers are never tired of each other's company, because they are always talking of themselves. This seems to be the bond of connexion (a delicate one it is!) between the painter and the sitter—they are always thinking and talking of the same thing, the picture, in which their self-love finds an equal counter-part. There is always something to be done or to be altered, that touches that sensitive chord—this feature was not exactly hit off, something is wanting to the nose or to the eye-brows, it may perhaps be as well to leave out this mark or that blemish, if it were possible to recal an expression that was remarked a short time before, it would be an indescribable advantage to the picture—a squint or a pimple on the face handsomely avoided may be a link of attachment ever after. He is no mean friend who conceals from ourselves, or only gently indicates, our obvious defects to the world. The sitter, by his repeated, minute, *fidgetty* inquiries about himself may be supposed to take an indirect and laudable method of arriving at self-knowledge; and the artist, in self-defence, is obliged to cultivate a scrupulous tenderness towards the feelings of his sitter, lest he should appear in the character of a spy upon

him. I do not conceive there is a stronger call upon secret gratitude than the having made a favourable likeness of any one; nor a surer ground of jealousy and dislike than the having failed in the attempt. A satire or a lampoon in writing is bad enough; but here we look doubly foolish, for we are ourselves parties to the plot, and have been at considerable pains to give evidence against ourselves. I have never had a plaster cast taken of myself: in truth, I rather shrink from the experiment; for I know I should be very much mortified if it did not turn out well, and should never forgive the unfortunate artist who had lent his assistance to prove that I looked like a blockhead!

The late Mr. Opie used to remark that the most sensible people made the best sitters; and I incline to his opinion, especially as I myself am an excellent sitter. Indeed, it seems to me a piece of mere impertinence not to sit as still as one can in these circumstances. I put the best face I can upon the matter, as well out of respect to the artist as to myself. I appear on my trial in the court of physiognomy, and am as anxious to make good a certain idea I have of myself, as if I were playing a part on the stage. I have no notion, how people go to sleep, who are sitting for their pictures. It is an evident sign of want of thought and of internal resources. There are some individuals, all whose ideas are in their hands and feet—make them sit still, and you put a stop to the machine altogether. The volatile spirit of quicksilver in them turns to a *caput mortuum*. Children are particularly sensible of this constraint from their thoughtlessness and liveliness. It is the next thing with them to wearing the fool's cap at school: yet they are proud of having their pictures taken, ask when they are to sit again, and are mightily pleased when they are done. Charles the First's children seem to have been good sitters, and the great dog sits like a Lord Chancellor.

The second time a person sits, and the view of the features is determined, the head seems fastened in an imaginary *vice*, and he can hardly tell what to make of his situation. He is continually overstepping the bounds of duty, and is tied down to certain lines and limits chalked out upon the canvas, to him 'invisible or dimly seen' on the throne where he is exalted. The painter has now a difficult task to manage—to throw in his gentle admonitions, 'A little more this way, sir,' or 'You bend rather too forward, madam,'—and ought to have a delicate white hand, that he may venture to adjust a straggling lock of hair, or by giving a slight turn to the head, co-operate in the practical attainment of a position. These are the ticklish and tiresome places of the work, before much progress is made, where the sitter grows peevish and abstracted, and the painter

more anxious and particular than he was the day before. Now is the time to fling in a few adroit compliments, or to introduce general topics of conversation. The artist ought to be a well-informed and agreeable man—able to expatiate on his art, and abounding in lively and characteristic anecdotes. Yet he ought not to talk too much, or to grow too animated; or the picture is apt to stand still, and the sitter to be aware of it. Accordingly, the best talkers in the profession have not always been the most successful portrait-painters. For this purpose it is desirable to bring a friend, who may relieve guard, or fill up the pauses of conversation, occasioned by the necessary attention of the painter to his business, and by the involuntary reveries of the sitter on what his own likeness will bring forth; or a book, a newspaper, or a port-folio of prints may serve to amuse the time. When the sitter's face begins to flag, the artist may then properly start a fresh topic of discourse, and while his attention is fixed on the graces called out by the varying interest of the subject, and the model anticipates, pleased and smiling, their being transferred every moment to the canvas, nothing is wanting to improve and carry to its height the amicable understanding and mutual satisfaction and good-will subsisting between these two persons, so happily occupied with each other!

Sir Joshua must have had a fine time of it with his sitters. Lords, ladies, generals, authors, opera-singers, musicians, the learned and the polite, besieged his doors, and found an unfailing welcome. What a rustling of silks! What a fluttering of flounces and brocades! What a cloud of powder and perfumes! What a flow of periwigs! What an exchange of civilities and of titles! What a recognition of old friendships, and an introduction of new acquaintance and sitters! It must, I think, be allowed that this is the only mode in which genius can form a legitimate union with wealth and fashion. There is a secret and sufficient tie in interest and vanity. Abstract topics of wit or learning do not furnish a connecting link: but the painter, the sculptor, come in close contact with the persons of the Great. The lady of quality, the courtier, and the artist, meet and shake hands on this common ground; the latter exercises a sort of natural jurisdiction and dictatorial power over the pretensions of the first to external beauty and accomplishment, which produces a mild sense and tone of equality; and the opulent sitter pays the taker of flattering likenesses handsomely for his trouble, which does not lessen the sympathy between them. There is even a satisfaction in paying down a high price for a picture—it seems as if one's head was worth something!—During the first sitting, Sir Joshua did little but chat with the new candidate for the fame of portraiture, try an attitude, or remark an

expression. His object was to gain time, by not being in haste to commit himself, until he was master of the subject before him. No one ever dropped in but the friends and acquaintance of the sitter—it was a rule with Sir Joshua that from the moment the latter entered, he was at home—the room belonged to him—but what secret whisperings would there be among these, what confidential, inaudible communications! It must be a refreshing moment, when the cake and wine had been handed round, and the artist began again. He, as it were, by this act of hospitality assumed a new character, and acquired a double claim to confidence and respect. In the mean time, the sitter would perhaps glance his eye round the room, and see a Titian or a Vandyke hanging in one corner, with a transient feeling of scepticism whether he should make such a picture. How the ladies of quality and fashion must bless themselves from being made to look like Dr. Johnson or Goldsmith! How proud the first of these would be, how happy the last, to fill the same arm-chair where the Bunburys and the Hornecks had sat! How superior the painter would feel to them all! By 'happy alchemy of mind,' he brought out all their good qualities and reconciled their defects, gave an air of studious ease to his learned friends, or lighted up the face of folly and fashion with intelligence and graceful smiles. Those portraits, however, that were most admired at the time, do not retain their pre-eminence now: the thought remains upon the brow, while the colour has faded from the cheek, or the dress grown obsolete; and after all, Sir Joshua's best pictures are those of his worst sitters—*his Children*. They suited best with his unfinished style; and are like the infancy of the art itself, happy, bold, and careless. Sir Joshua formed the circle of his private friends from the *elite* of his sitters; and Vandyke was, it appears, on the same footing with his. When any of those noble or distinguished persons whom he has immortalised with his pencil, were sitting to him, he used to ask them to dinner, and afterwards it was their custom to return to the picture again, so that it is said that many of his finest portraits were done in this manner, ere the colours were yet dry, in the course of a single day. Oh! ephemeral works to last for ever!

Vandyke married a daughter of Earl Gower, of whom there is a very beautiful picture. She was the Œnone, and he his own Paris. A painter of the name of Astley married a Lady ——, who sat to him for her picture. He was a wretched hand, but a fine person of a man, and a great coxcomb; and on his strutting up and down before the portrait when it was done with a prodigious air of satisfaction, she observed, 'If he was so pleased with the copy, he might

have the original.' This Astley was a person of magnificent habits and a sumptuous taste in living; and is the same of whom the anecdote is recorded, that when some English students walking out near Rome were compelled by the heat to strip off their coats, Astley displayed a waistcoat with a huge waterfall streaming down the back of it, which was a piece of one of his own canvases that he had converted to this purpose. Sir Joshua fell in love with one of his fair sitters, a young and beautiful girl, who ran out one day in a great panic and confusion, hid her face in her companion's lap who was reading in an outer room, and said, 'Sir Joshua had made her an offer!' This circumstance perhaps deserves mentioning the more, because there is a general idea that Sir Joshua Reynolds was a confirmed old bachelor. Goldsmith conceived a fruitless attachment to the same person, and addressed some passionate letters to her. Alas! it is the fate of genius to admire and to celebrate beauty, not to enjoy it! It is a fate, perhaps not without its compensations—

> 'Had Petrarch gained his Laura for a wife,
> Would he have written Sonnets all his life?'

This distinguished beauty is still living, and handsomer than Sir Joshua's picture of her when a girl; and inveighs against the freedom of Lord Byron's pen with all the charming prudery of the last age.[1]

The relation between the portrait-painter and his amiable sitters is one of established custom: but it is also one of metaphysical nicety, and is a running *double entendre*. The fixing an inquisitive gaze on beauty, the heightening a momentary grace, the dwelling on the heaven of an eye, the losing one's-self in the dimple of a chin, is a dangerous employment. The painter may chance to slide into the lover—the lover can hardly turn painter. The eye indeed grows critical, the hand is busy: but are the senses unmoved? We are employed to transfer living charms to an inanimate surface; but they may sink into the heart by the way, and the nerveless hand be unable to carry its luscious burden any further. St. Preux wonders at the rash mortal who had dared to trace the features of his Julia; and accuses him of insensibility without reason. Perhaps he too had an enthusiasm and pleasures of his own! Mr. Burke, in his *Sublime*

[1] Sir Joshua may be thought to have studied the composition of his female portraits very coolly. There is a picture of his remaining of a Mrs. Symmons, who appears to have been a delicate beauty, pale, with a very little colour in her cheeks: but then to set off this want of complexion, she is painted in a snow-white satin dress, there is a white marble pillar near her, a white cloud over her head, and by her side stands one white lily.

and Beautiful, has left a description of what he terms the most beautiful object in nature, the neck of a lovely and innocent female, which is written very much as if he had himself formerly painted this object, and sacrificed at this formidable shrine. There is no doubt that the perception of beauty becomes more exquisite ('till the sense aches at it') by being studied and refined upon as an object of art—it is at the same time fortunately neutralised by this means, or the painter would run mad. It is converted into an abstraction, an *ideal* thing, into something intermediate between nature and art, hovering between a living substance and a senseless shadow. The health and spirit that but now breathed from a speaking face, the next moment breathe with almost equal effect from a dull piece of canvas, and thus distract attention: the eye sparkles, the lips are moist there too; and if we can fancy the picture alive, the face in its turn fades into a picture, a mere object of sight. We take rapturous possession with one sense, the eye; but the artist's pencil acts as a non-conductor to the grosser desires. Besides, the sense of duty, of propriety interferes. It is not the question at issue: we have other work on our hands, and enough to do. Love is the product of ease and idleness: but the painter has an anxious, feverish, never-ending task, to rival the beauty, to which he dare not aspire even in thought, or in a dream of bliss. Paints and brushes are not 'amorous toys of light-winged Cupid'; a rising sigh evaporates in the aroma of some fine oil-colour or varnish, a kindling blush is transfixed in a bed of vermilion on the palette. A blue vein meandering in a white wrist invites the hand to touch it: but it is better to proceed, and not spoil the picture. The ambiguity becomes more striking in painting from the naked figure. If the wonder occasioned by the object is greater, so is the despair of rivalling what we see. The sense of responsibility increases with the hope of creating an artificial splendour to match the real one. The display of unexpected charm foils our vanity, and mortifies passion. The painting *A Diana and Nymphs* is like plunging into a cold bath of desire: to make a statue of a *Venus* transforms the sculptor himself to stone. The snow on the lap of beauty freezes the soul. The heedless, unsuspecting licence of foreign manners gives the artist abroad an advantage over ours at home. Sir Joshua Reynolds painted only the head of Iphigene from a beautiful woman of quality: Canova had innocent girls to sit to him for his Graces. The Princess Borghese, whose symmetry of form was admirable, sat to him for a model, which he considered as his master-piece and the perfection of the female form; and when asked if she did not feel uncomfortable while it was taking, she replied with great indifference, 'No: it was not cold!' I have but one



other word to add on this part of the subject: if having to paint a delicate and modest female is a temptation to gallantry, on the other hand the sitting to a lady for one's picture is a still more trying situation, and amounts (almost of itself) to a declaration of love!

Landscape-painting is free from these tormenting dilemmas and embarrassments. It is as full of the feeling of pastoral simplicity and ease, as portrait-painting is of personal vanity and egotism. Away then with those incumbrances to the true liberty of thought—the sitter's chair, the bag-wig and sword, the drapery, the lay figure—and let us to some retired spot in the country, take out our portfolio, plant our easel, and begin. We are all at once shrouded from observation—

> 'The world forgetting, by the world forgot!'

We enjoy the cool shade, with solitude and silence; or hear the dashing waterfall,

> 'Or stock-dove plain amid the forest deep,
> That drowsy rustles to the sighing gale.'

It seems almost a shame to do any thing, we are so well content without it; but the eye is restless, and we must have something to show when we get home. We set to work, and failure or success prompts us to go on. We take up the pencil, or lay it down again, as we please. We muse or paint, as objects strike our senses or our reflection. The perfect leisure we feel turns labour to a luxury. We try to imitate the grey colour of a rock or of the bark of a tree: the breeze wafted from its broad foliage gives us fresh spirits to proceed, we dip our pencil in the sky, or ask the white clouds sailing over its bosom to sit for their pictures. We are in no hurry, and have the day before us. Or else, escaping from the close-embowered scene, we catch fading distances on airy downs, and seize on golden sunsets with the fleecy flocks glittering in the evening ray, after a shower of rain has fallen. Or from Norwood's ridgy heights, survey the snake-like Thames, or its smoke-crowned capital;

> 'Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,
> Then shield us in the woods again.'

No one thinks of disturbing a landscape-painter at his task: he seems a kind of magician, the privileged genius of the place. Wherever a Claude, a Wilson has introduced his own portrait in the foreground of a picture, we look at it with interest (however ill it may be done) feeling that it is the portrait of one who was quite happy at the time, and how glad we should be to change places with him.

ON SITTING FOR ONE'S PICTURE

Mr. Burke has brought in a striking episode in one of his later works in allusion to Sir Joshua's portrait of Lord Keppel, with those of some other friends, painted in their better days. The portrait is indeed a fine one, worthy of the artist and the critic, and perhaps recalls Lord Keppel's memory oftener than any other circumstance at present does.[1] Portrait-painting is in truth a sort of cement of friendship, and a clue to history. That blockhead, Mr. C****r, of the Admiralty, the other day blundered upon some observations of mine relating to this subject, and made the House stare by asserting that portrait-painting was history or history portrait, as it happened; but went on to add, 'That those gentlemen who had seen the ancient portraits lately exhibited in Pall-mall, must have been satisfied that they were strictly *historical*;' which showed that he knew nothing at all of the matter, and merely talked by rote. There was nothing historical in the generality of those portraits, except that they were portraits of people mentioned in history—there was no more of the

[1] 'No man lives too long, who lives to do with spirit, and suffer with resignation, what Providence pleases to command or inflict: but indeed they are sharp incommodities which beset old age. It was but the other day, that in putting in order some things which had been brought here on my taking leave of London for ever, I looked over a number of fine portraits, most of them of persons now dead, but whose society, in my better days, made this a proud and happy place. Amongst these was the picture of Lord Keppel. It was painted by an artist worthy of the subject, the excellent friend of that excellent man from their earliest youth, and a common friend of us both, with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness, of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation.

'I ever looked on Lord Keppel as one of the greatest and best men of his age; and I loved and cultivated him accordingly. He was much in my heart, and I believe I was in his to the very last beat. It was after his trial at Portsmouth that he gave me this picture. With what zeal and anxious affection I attended him through that his agony of glory; what part, my son, in early flush and enthusiasm of his virtue and the pious passion with which he attached himself to all my connexions, with what prodigality we both squandered ourselves in courting almost every sort of enmity for his sake, I believe he felt, just as I should have felt, such friendship on such an occasion.'—*Letter to a Noble Lord*, p. 29, *second edition, printed for T. Williams.*

I have given this passage entire here, because I wish to be informed, if I could, what is the construction of the last sentence of it. It has puzzled me all my life. One difficulty might be got over by making a pause after 'I believe he felt,' and leaving out the comma between 'have felt' and 'such friendship.' That is, the meaning would be, 'I believe he felt with what zeal and anxious affection,' &c. 'just as I should have felt such friendship on such an occasion.' But then again, what is to become of the 'what part, my son?' &c. With what does this connect, or to what verb is 'my son' the nominative case, or by what verb is 'what part' governed? I should really be glad, if, from any manuscript, printed copy, or marginal correction, this point could be cleared up, and so fine a passage resolved, by any possible ellipsis, into ordinary grammar.



spirit of history in them (which is *passion* or *action*) than in their dresses. But this is the way in which that person, by his pettifogging habits and literal understanding, always mistakes a verbal truism for sense, and a misnomer for wit! I was going to observe, that I think the aiding the recollection of our family and friends in our absence may be a frequent and strong inducement to sitting for our pictures; but that I believe the love of posthumous fame, or of continuing our memories after we are dead, has very little to do with it. And one reason I should give for that opinion is this, that we are not naturally very prone to dwell with pleasure on any thing that may happen in relation to us after we are dead, because we are not fond of thinking of death at all. We shrink equally from the prospect of that fatal event or from any speculation on its consequences. The surviving ourselves in our pictures is but a poor compensation—it is rather adding mockery to calamity. The perpetuating our names in the wide page of history or to a remote posterity is a vague calculation, that may take out the immediate sting of mortality—whereas we ourselves may hope to last (by a fortunate extension of the term of human life) almost as long as an ordinary portrait; and the wounds of lacerated friendship it heals must be still green, and our ashes scarcely cold. I think therefore that the looking forward to this mode of keeping alive the memory of what we were by lifeless hues and discoloured features, is not among the most approved consolations of human life, or favourite dalliances of the imagination. Yet I own I should like some part of me, as the hair or even nails, to be preserved entire, or I should have no objection to lie like Whitfield in a state of petrifaction. This smacks of the bodily reality at least—acts like a deception to the spectator, and breaks the fall from this 'warm, kneaded motion to a clod'—from that to nothing—even to the person himself. I suspect that the idea of posthumous fame, which has so unwelcome a condition annexed to it, loses its general relish as we advance in life, and that it is only while we are young that we pamper our imaginations with this bait, with a sort of impunity. The reversion of immortality is then so distant, that we may talk of it without much fear of entering upon immediate possession: death is itself a fable—a sound that dies upon our lips; and the only certainty seems the only impossibility. Fame, at that romantic period, is the first thing in our mouths, and death the last in our thoughts.

IS GENIUS CONSCIOUS OF ITS POWERS?

ESSAY XII

WHETHER GENIUS IS CONSCIOUS OF ITS POWERS?

No really great man ever thought himself so. The idea of greatness in the mind answers but ill to our knowledge—or to our ignorance of ourselves. What living prose-writer, for instance, would think of comparing himself with Burke? Yet would it not have been equal presumption or egotism in him to fancy himself equal to those who had gone before him—Bolingbroke or Johnson or Sir William Temple? Because his rank in letters is become a settled point with us, we conclude that it must have been quite as self-evident to him, and that he must have been perfectly conscious of his vast superiority to the rest of the world. Alas! not so. No man is truly himself, but in the idea which others entertain of him. The mind, as well as the eye, 'sees not itself, but by reflection from some other thing.' What parity can there be between the effect of habitual composition on the mind of the individual, and the surprise occasioned by first reading a fine passage in an admired author; between what we do with ease, and what we thought it next to impossible ever to be done; between the reverential awe we have for years encouraged, without seeing reason to alter it, for distinguished genius, and the slow, reluctant, unwelcome conviction that after infinite toil and repeated disappointments, and when it is too late and to little purpose, we have ourselves at length accomplished what we at first proposed; between the insignificance of our petty, personal pretensions, and the vastness and splendour which the atmosphere of imagination lends to an illustrious name? He who comes up to his own idea of greatness, must always have had a very low standard of it in his mind. 'What a pity,' said some one, 'that Milton had not the pleasure of reading Paradise Lost!' He could not read it, as we do, with the weight of impression that a hundred years of admiration have added to it—'a phœnix gazed by all'—with the sense of the number of editions it has passed through with still increasing reputation, with the tone of solidity, time-proof, which it has received from the breath of cold, envious maligners, with the sound which the voice of Fame has lent to every line of it! The writer of an ephemeral production may be as much dazzled with it as the public: it may sparkle in his own eyes for a moment, and be soon forgotten by every one else. But no one can anticipate the suffrages of posterity. Every man, in judging of himself, is his own contemporary. He may feel the gale of

popularity, but he cannot tell how long it will last. His opinion of himself wants distance, wants time, wants numbers, to set it off and confirm it. He must be indifferent to his own merits, before he can feel a confidence in them. Besides, every one must be sensible of a thousand weaknesses and deficiencies in himself; whereas Genius only leaves behind it the monuments of its strength. A great name is an abstraction of some one excellence: but whoever fancies himself an abstraction of excellence, so far from being great, may be sure that he is a blockhead, equally ignorant of excellence or defect, of himself or others. Mr. Burke, besides being the author of the *Reflections*, and the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, had a wife and son; and had to think as much about them as we do about him. The imagination gains nothing by the minute details of personal knowledge.

On the other hand, it may be said that no man knows so well as the author of any performance what it has cost him, and the length of time and study devoted to it. This is one, among other reasons, why no man can pronounce an opinion upon himself. The happiness of the result bears no proportion to the difficulties overcome or the pains taken. *Materiam superabat opus*, is an old and fatal complaint. The definition of genius is that it acts unconsciously; and those who have produced immortal works, have done so without knowing how or why. The greatest power operates unseen, and executes its appointed task with as little ostentation as difficulty. Whatever is done best, is done from the natural bent and disposition of the mind. It is only where our incapacity begins, that we begin to feel the obstacles, and to set an undue value on our triumph over them. Correggio, Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, did what they did without premeditation or effort—their works came from their minds as a natural birth—if you had asked them why they adopted this or that style, they would have answered, *because they could not help it*, and because they knew of no other. So Shakespear says:

> 'Our poesy is as a gum which issues
> From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i' th' flint
> Shows not till it be struck: our gentle flame
> Provokes itself; and, like the current, flies
> Each bound it chafes.'

Shakespear himself was an example of his own rule, and appears to have owed almost every thing to chance, scarce any thing to industry or design. His poetry flashes from him, like the lightning from the summer-cloud, or the stroke from the sun-flower. When we look at the admirable comic designs of Hogarth, they seem, from the unfinished state in which they are left, and from the freedom of the

pencilling, to have cost him little trouble; whereas the *Sigismunda* is a very laboured and comparatively feeble performance, and he accordingly set great store by it. He also thought highly of his portraits, and boasted that 'he could paint equal to Vandyke, give him his time and let him choose his subject.' This was the very reason why he could not. Vandyke's excellence consisted in this, that he could paint a fine portrait of any one at sight: let him take ever so much pains or choose ever so bad a subject, he could not help making something of it. His eye, his mind, his hand was cast in the mould of grace and delicacy. Milton again is understood to have preferred *Paradise Regained* to his other works. This, if so, was either because he himself was conscious of having failed in it; or because others thought he had. We are willing to think well of that which we know wants our favourable opinion, and to prop the ricketty bantling. Every step taken, *invitâ Minerva*, costs us something, and is set down to account; whereas we are borne on the full tide of genius and success into the very haven of our desires, almost imperceptibly. The strength of the impulse by which we are carried along prevents the sense of difficulty or resistance: the true inspiration of the Muse is soft and balmy as the air we breathe; and indeed, leaves us little to boast of, for the effect hardly seems to be our own.

There are two persons who always appear to me to have worked under this involuntary, silent impulse more than any others; I mean Rembrandt and Correggio. It is not known that Correggio ever saw a picture of any great master. He lived and died obscurely in an obscure village. We have few of his works, but they are all perfect. What truth, what grace, what angelic sweetness are there! Not one line or tone that is not divinely soft or exquisitely fair; the painter's mind rejecting, by a natural process, all that is discordant, coarse, or unpleasing. The whole is an emanation of pure thought. The work grew under his hand as if of itself, and came out without a flaw, like the diamond from the rock. He knew not what he did; and looked at each modest grace as it stole from the canvas with anxious delight and wonder. Ah! gracious God! not he alone; how many more in all time have looked at their works with the same feelings, not knowing but they too may have done something divine, immortal, and finding in that sole doubt ample amends for pining solitude, for want, neglect, and an untimely fate. Oh! for one hour of that uneasy rapture, when the mind first thinks it has struck out something that may last for ever; when the germ of excellence bursts from nothing on the startled sight! Take, take away the gaudy triumphs of the world, the long deathless shout of fame, and give back that heart-felt sigh with which the youthful enthusiast first weds immortality as his

secret bride! And thou too, Rembrandt! who wert a man of genius, if ever painter was a man of genius, did this dream hang over you as you painted that strange picture of *Jacob's Ladder?* Did your eye strain over those gradual dusky clouds into futurity, or did those white-vested, beaked figures babble to you of fame as they approached? Did you know what you were about, or did you not paint much as it happened? Oh! if you had thought once about yourself, or any thing but the subject, it would have been all over with 'the glory, the intuition, the amenity,' the dream had fled, the spell had been broken. The hills would not have looked like those we see in sleep—that tatterdemalion figure of Jacob, thrown on one side, would not have slept as if the breath was fairly taken out of his body. So much do Rembrandt's pictures savour of the soul and body of reality, that the thoughts seem identical with the objects—if there had been the least question what he should have done, or how he should do it, or how far he had succeeded, it would have spoiled every thing. Lumps of light hung upon his pencil and fell upon his canvas like dew-drops: the shadowy veil was drawn over his backgrounds by the dull, obtuse finger of night, making darkness visible by still greater darkness that could only be felt!

Cervantes is another instance of a man of genius, whose work may be said to have sprung from his mind, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Don Quixote and Sancho were a kind of twins; and the jests of the latter, as he says, fell from him like drops of rain when he least thought of it. Shakespear's creations were more multiform, but equally natural and unstudied. Raphael and Milton seem partial exceptions to this rule. Their productions were of the *composite order*; and those of the latter sometimes even amount to centos. Accordingly, we find Milton quoted among those authors, who have left proofs of their entertaining a high opinion of themselves, and of cherishing a strong aspiration after fame. Some of Shakespear's Sonnets have been also cited to the same purpose; but they seem rather to convey wayward and dissatisfied complaints of his untoward fortune than any thing like a triumphant and confident reliance on his future renown. He appears to have stood more alone and to have thought less about himself than any living being. One reason for this indifference may have been, that as a writer he was tolerably successful in his life-time, and no doubt produced his works with very great facility.

I hardly know whether to class Claude Lorraine as among those who succeeded most 'through happiness or pains.' It is certain that he imitated no one, and has had no successful imitator. The perfection of his landscapes seems to have been owing to an inherent quality

of harmony, to an exquisite sense of delicacy in his mind. His monotony has been complained of, which is apparently produced from a preconceived idea in his mind; and not long ago I heard a person, not more distinguished for the subtilty than the *naïveté* of his sarcasms, remark, 'Oh! I never look at Claude: if one has seen one of his pictures, one has seen them all; they are every one alike: there is the same sky, the same climate, the same time of day, the same tree, and that tree is like a cabbage. To be sure, they say he did pretty well; but when a man is always doing one thing, he ought to do it pretty well.' There is no occasion to write the name under this criticism, and the best answer to it is that it is true—his pictures always are the same, but we never wish them to be otherwise. Perfection is one thing. I confess I think that Claude knew this, and felt that his were the finest landscapes in the world—that ever had been, or would ever be.

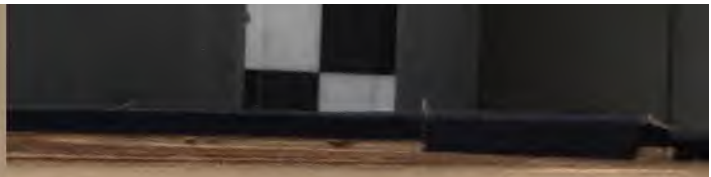
I am not in the humour to pursue this argument any farther at present, but to write a digression. If the reader is not already apprised of it, he will please to take notice that I write this at Winterslow. My style there is apt to be redundant and excursive. At other times it may be cramped, dry, abrupt; but here it flows like a river, and overspreads its banks. I have not to seek for thoughts or hunt for images: they come of themselves, I inhale them with the breeze, and the silent groves are vocal with a thousand recollections—

> 'And visions, as poetic eyes avow,
> Hang on each leaf, and cling to ev'ry bough.'

Here I came fifteen years ago, a willing exile; and as I trod the lengthened greensward by the low wood-side, repeated the old line,

> 'My mind to me a kingdom is!'

I found it so then, before, and since; and shall I faint, now that I have poured out the spirit of that mind to the world, and treated many subjects with truth, with freedom, and power, because I have been followed with one cry of abuse ever since *for not being a government-tool?* Here I returned a few years after to finish some works I had undertaken, doubtful of the event, but determined to do my best; and wrote that character of Millimant which was once transcribed by fingers fairer than Aurora's, but no notice was taken of it, because I was not a government-tool, and must be supposed devoid of taste and elegance by all who aspired to these qualities in their own persons. Here I sketched my account of that old honest Signior Orlando Friscobaldo, which with its fine, racy, acrid tone that old crab-apple, G*ff***d, would have relished or pretended to relish, had I been a



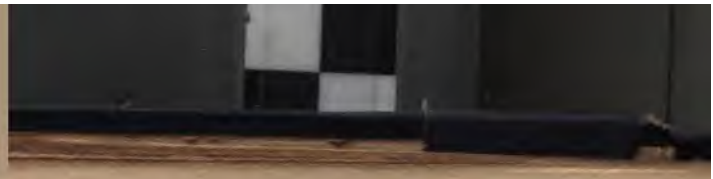
government-tool! Here too I have written *Table-Talks* without number, and as yet without a falling-off, till now that they are nearly done, or I should not make this boast. I could swear (were they not mine) the thoughts in many of them are founded as the rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture. What then? Had the style been like polished steel, as firm and as bright, it would have availed me nothing, for I am not a government-tool! I had endeavoured to guide the taste of the English people to the best old English writers; but I had said that English kings did not reign by right divine, and that his present majesty was descended from an elector of Hanover in a right line; and no loyal subject would after this look into Webster or Deckar because I had pointed them out. I had done something (more than any one except Schlegel) to vindicate the *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* from the stigma of French criticism: but our Anti-Jacobin and Anti-Gallican writers soon found out that I had said and written that Frenchmen, Englishmen, men were not slaves by birth-right. This was enough to *damn* the work. Such has been the head and front of my offending. While my friend Leigh Hunt was writing the *Descent of Liberty*, and strewing the march of the Allied Sovereigns with flowers, I sat by the waters of Babylon and hung my harp upon the willows. I knew all along there was but one alternative—the cause of kings or of mankind. This I foresaw, this I feared; the world see it now, when it is too late. Therefore I lamented, and would take no comfort when the Mighty fell, because we, all men, fell with him, like lightning from heaven, to grovel in the grave of Liberty, in the stye of Legitimacy! There is but one question in the hearts of monarchs, whether mankind are their property or not. There was but this one question in mine. I had made an abstract, metaphysical principle of this question. I was not the dupe of the voice of the charmers. By my hatred of tyrants I knew what their hatred of the free-born spirit of man must be, of the semblance, of the very name of Liberty and Humanity. And while others bowed their heads to the image of the Beast, I spit upon it and buffetted it, and made mouths at it, and pointed at it, and drew aside the veil that then half concealed it, but has been since thrown off, and named it by its right name; and it is not to be supposed that my having penetrated their mystery would go unrequited by those whose darling and whose delight the idol, half-brute, half-demon, was, and who were ashamed to acknowledge the image and superscription as their own! Two half-friends of mine, who would not make a whole one between them, agreed the other day that the indiscriminate, incessant abuse of what I write was mere prejudice and party-spirit, and that what I do in periodicals and without a name

does well, pays well, and is 'cried out upon in the top of the compass.' It is this indeed that has saved my shallow skiff from quite foundering on Tory spite and rancour; for when people have been reading and approving an article in a miscellaneous journal, it does not do to say when they discover the author afterwards (whatever might have been the case before) it is written by a blockhead; and even Mr. Jerdan recommends the volume of CHARACTERISTICS as an excellent little work, because it has no cabalistic name in the title-page, and swears 'there is a first-rate article of forty pages in the last number of the Edinburgh from Jeffrey's own hand,' though when he learns against his will that it is mine, he devotes three successive numbers of the LITERARY GAZETTE to abuse 'that *strange* article in the last number of the Edinburgh Review.' Others who had not this advantage have fallen a sacrifice to the obloquy attached to the suspicion of doubting, or of being acquainted with any one who is known to doubt, the divinity of kings. Poor Keats paid the forfeit of this *lezè majesté* with his health and life. What, though his Verses were like the breath of spring, and many of his thoughts like flowers —would this, with the circle of critics that beset a throne, lessen the crime of their having been praised in the Examiner? The lively and most agreeable Editor of that paper has in like manner been driven from his country and his friends who delighted in him, for no other reason than having written the Story of Rimini, and asserted ten years ago, 'that the most accomplished prince in Europe was an Adonis of fifty!'

> 'Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past,
> That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse!'

I look out of my window and see that a shower has just fallen: the fields look green after it, and a rosy cloud hangs over the brow of the hill; a lily expands its petals in the moisture, dressed in its lovely green and white; a shepherd-boy has just brought some pieces of turf with daisies and grass for his young mistress to make a bed for her sky-lark, not doomed to dip his wings in the dappled dawn—my cloudy thoughts draw off, the storm of angry politics has blown over —Mr. Blackwood, I am yours—Mr. Croker, my service to you— Mr. T. Moore, I am alive and well—Really, it is wonderful how little the worse I am for fifteen years' wear and tear, how I come upon my legs again on the ground of truth and nature, and 'look abroad into universality,' forgetting that there is any such person as myself in the world!

I have let this passage stand (however critical) because it may serve as a practical illustration to show what authors really think of



themselves when put upon the defensive—(I confess, the subject has nothing to do with the title at the head of the Essay!)—and as a warning to those who may reckon upon their fair portion of popularity as the reward of the exercise of an independent spirit and such talents as they possess. It sometimes seems at first sight as if the low scurrility and jargon of abuse by which it is attempted to overlay all common sense and decency by a tissue of lies and nicknames, everlastingly repeated and applied indiscriminately to all those who are not of the regular government-party, was peculiar to the present time, and the anomalous growth of modern criticism; but if we look back, we shall find the same system acted upon, as often as power, prejudice, dulness, and spite found their account in playing the game into one another's hands—in decrying popular efforts, and in giving currency to every species of base metal that had their own conventional stamp upon it. The names of Pope and Dryden were assailed with daily and unsparing abuse—the epithet A. P. E. was levelled at the sacred head of the former—and if even men like these, having to deal with the consciousness of their own infirmities and the insolence and spurns of wanton enmity, must have found it hard to possess their souls in patience, any living writer amidst such contradictory evidence can scarcely expect to retain much calm, steady conviction of his own merits, or build himself a secure reversion in immortality.

However one may in a fit of spleen and impatience turn round and assert one's claims in the face of low-bred, hireling malice, I will here repeat what I set out with saying, that there never yet was a man of sense and proper spirit, who would not decline rather than court a comparison with any of those names, whose reputation he really emulates—who would not be sorry to suppose that any of the great heirs of memory had as many foibles as he knows himself to possess—and who would not shrink from including himself or being included by others in the same praise, that was offered to long-established and universally acknowledged merit, as a kind of profanation. Those who are ready to fancy themselves Raphaels and Homers are very inferior men indeed—they have not even an idea of the mighty names that 'they take in vain.' They are as deficient in pride as in modesty, and have not so much as served an apprenticeship to a true and honourable ambition. They mistake a momentary popularity for lasting renown, and a sanguine temperament for the inspirations of genius. The love of fame is too high and delicate a feeling in the mind to be mixed up with realities—it is a solitary abstraction, the secret sigh of the soul—

> 'It is all one as we should love
> A bright particular star, and think to wed it.'

IS GENIUS CONSCIOUS OF ITS POWERS?

A name 'fast-anchored in the deep abyss of time' is like a star twinkling in the firmament, cold, silent, distant, but eternal and sublime; and our transmitting one to posterity is as if we should contemplate our translation to the skies. If we are not contented with this feeling on the subject, we shall never sit in Cassiopeia's chair, nor will our names, studding Ariadne's crown or streaming with Berenice's locks, ever make

'the face of heaven so bright,
That birds shall sing, and think it were not night.'

Those who are in love only with noise and show, instead of devoting themselves to a life of study, had better hire a booth at Bartlemy-Fair, or march at the head of a recruiting regiment with drums beating and colours flying!

It has been urged, that however little we may be disposed to indulge the reflection at other times or out of mere self-complacency, yet the mind cannot help being conscious of the effort required for any great work while it is about it, of

'The high endeavour and the glad success.'

I grant that there is a sense of power in such cases, with the exception before stated; but then this very effort and state of excitement engrosses the mind at the time, and leaves it listless and exhausted afterwards. The energy we exert, or the high state of enjoyment we feel, puts us out of conceit with ourselves at other times: compared to what we are in the act of composition, we seem dull, common-place people, generally speaking; and what we have been able to perform is rather matter of wonder than of self-congratulation to us. The stimulus of writing is like the stimulus of intoxication, with which we can hardly sympathise in our sober moments, when we are no longer under the inspiration of the demon, or when the virtue is gone out of us. While we are engaged in any work, we are thinking of the subject, and cannot stop to admire ourselves; and when it is done, we look at it with comparative indifference. I will venture to say, that no one but a pedant ever read his own works regularly through. They are not *his*—they are become mere words, waste-paper, and have none of the glow, the creative enthusiasm, the vehemence, and natural spirit with which he wrote them. When we have once committed our thoughts to paper, written them fairly out, and seen that they are right in the printing, if we are in our right wits, we have done with them for ever. I sometimes try to read an article I have written in some magazine or review—(for when they are bound up in a volume, I dread the very

sight of them)—but stop after a sentence or two, and never recur to the task. I know pretty well what I have to say on the subject, and do not want to go to school to myself. It is the worst instance of the *bis repetita crambe* in the world. I do not think that even painters have much delight in looking at their works after they are done. While they are in progress, there is a great degree of satisfaction in considering what has been done, or what is still to do—but this is hope, is reverie, and ceases with the completion of our efforts. I should not imagine Raphael or Correggio would have much pleasure in looking at their former works, though they might recollect the pleasure they had had in painting them; they might spy defects in them (for the idea of unattainable perfection still keeps pace with our actual approaches to it), and fancy that they were not worthy of immortality. The greatest portrait-painter the world ever saw used to write under his pictures, '*Titianus faciebat*,' signifying that they were imperfect; and in his letter to Charles v. accompanying one of his most admired works, he only spoke of the time he had been about it. Annibal Caracci boasted that he could do like Titian and Correggio, and, like most boasters, was wrong. (*See his spirited Letter to his cousin Ludovico, on seeing the pictures at Parma.*)

The greatest pleasure in life is that of reading, while we are young. I have had as much of this pleasure as perhaps any one. As I grow older, it fades; or else, the stronger stimulus of writing takes off the edge of it. At present, I have neither time nor inclination for it: yet I should like to devote a year's entire leisure to a course of the English Novelists; and perhaps clap on that old sly knave, Sir Walter, to the end of the list. It is astonishing how I used formerly to relish the style of certain authors, at a time when I myself despaired of ever writing a single line. Probably this was the reason. It is not in mental as in natural ascent—intellectual objects seem higher when we survey them from below, than when we look down from any given elevation above the common level. My three favourite writers about the time I speak of were Burke, Junius, and Rousseau. I was never weary of admiring and wondering at the felicities of the style, the turns of expression, the refinements of thought and sentiment: I laid the book down to find out the secret of so much strength and beauty, and took it up again in despair, to read on and admire. So I passed whole days, months, and I may add, years; and have only this to say now, that as my life began, so I could wish that it may end. The last time I tasted this luxury in its full perfection was one day after a sultry day's walk in summer between Farnham and Alton. I was fairly tired out; I walked into an inn-yard (I think at the latter place); I was shown by the waiter

to what looked at first like common out-houses at the other end of it, but they turned out to be a suite of rooms, probably a hundred years old—the one I entered opened into an old-fashioned garden, embellished with beds of larkspur and a leaden Mercury; it was wainscoted, and there was a grave-looking, dark-coloured portrait of Charles II. hanging up over the tiled chimney-piece. I had '*Love for Love*' in my pocket, and began to read; coffee was brought in in a silver coffee-pot; the cream, the bread and butter, every thing was excellent, and the flavour of Congreve's style prevailed over all. I prolonged the entertainment till a late hour, and relished this divine comedy better even than when I used to see it played by Miss Mellon, as *Miss Prue*; Bob Palmer, as *Tattle*; and Bannister, as honest *Ben*. This circumstance happened just five years ago, and it seems like yesterday. If I count my life so by lustres, it will soon glide away; yet I shall not have to repine, if, while it lasts, it is enriched with a few such recollections!

ESSAY XIII

ON THE PLEASURE OF HATING

THERE is a spider crawling along the matted floor of the room where I sit (not the one which has been so well allegorised in the admirable *Lines to a Spider*, but another of the same edifying breed)—he runs with heedless, hurried haste, he hobbles awkwardly towards me, he stops—he sees the giant shadow before him, and, at a loss whether to retreat or proceed, meditates his huge foe—but as I do not start up and seize upon the straggling caitiff, as he would upon a hapless fly within his toils, he takes heart, and ventures on, with mingled cunning, impudence, and fear. As he passes me, I lift up the matting to assist his escape, am glad to get rid of the unwelcome intruder, and shudder at the recollection after he is gone. A child, a woman, a clown, or a moralist a century ago, would have crushed the little reptile to death—my philosophy has got beyond that—I bear the creature no ill-will, but still I hate the very sight of it. The spirit of malevolence survives the practical exertion of it. We learn to curb our will and keep our overt actions within the bounds of humanity, long before we can subdue our sentiments and imaginations to the same mild tone. We give up the external demonstration, the *brute* violence, but cannot part with the essence or principle of hostility. We do not tread upon the poor little animal in question

(that seems barbarous and pitiful!) but we regard it with a sort of mystic horror and superstitious loathing. It will ask another hundred years of fine writing and hard thinking to cure us of the prejudice, and make us feel towards this ill-omened tribe with something of 'the milk of human kindness,' instead of their own shyness and venom.

Nature seems (the more we look into it) made up of antipathies: without something to hate, we should lose the very spring of thought and action. Life would turn to a stagnant pool, were it not ruffled by the jarring interests, the unruly passions of men. The white streak in our own fortunes is brightened (or just rendered visible) by making all around it as dark as possible; so the rainbow paints its form upon the cloud. Is it pride? Is it envy? Is it the force of contrast? Is it weakness or malice? But so it is, that there is a secret affinity, a *hankering* after evil in the human mind, and that it takes a perverse, but a fortunate delight in mischief, since it is a never-failing source of satisfaction. Pure good soon grows insipid, wants variety and spirit. Pain is a bitter-sweet, which never surfeits. Love turns, with a little indulgence, to indifference or disgust: hatred alone is immortal.—Do we not see this principle at work every where? Animals torment and worry one another without mercy: children kill flies for sport: every one reads the accidents and offences in a newspaper, as the cream of the jest: a whole town runs to be present at a fire, and the spectator by no means exults to see it extinguished. It is better to have it so, but it diminishes the interest; and our feelings take part with our passions, rather than with our understandings. Men assemble in crowds, with eager enthusiasm, to witness a tragedy: but if there were an execution going forward in the next street, as Mr. Burke observes, the theatre would be left empty. A strange cur in a village, an idiot, a crazy woman, are set upon and baited by the whole community. Public nuisances are in the nature of public benefits. How long did the Pope, the Bourbons, and the Inquisition keep the people of England in breath, and supply them with nick-names to vent their spleen upon! Had they done us any harm of late? No: but we have always a quantity of superfluous bile upon the stomach, and we wanted an object to let it out upon. How loth were we to give up our pious belief in ghosts and witches, because we liked to persecute the one, and frighten ourselves to death with the other! It is not the quality so much as the quantity of excitement that we are anxious about: we cannot bear a state of indifference and *ennui*: the mind seems to abhor a *vacuum* as much as ever matter was supposed to do. Even when the spirit of the age (that is, the

progress of intellectual refinement, warring with our natural infirmities) no longer allows us to carry our vindictive and headstrong humours into effect, we try to revive them in description, and keep up the old bugbears, the phantoms of our terror and our hate, in imagination. We burn Guy Faux in effigy, and the hooting and buffeting and maltreating that poor tattered figure of rags and straw makes a festival in every village in England once a year. Protestants and Papists do not now burn one another at the stake: but we subscribe to new editions of *Fox's Book of Martyrs*; and the secret of the success of the *Scotch Novels* is much the same—they carry us back to the feuds, the heart-burnings, the havoc, the dismay, the wrongs and the revenge of a barbarous age and people—to the rooted prejudices and deadly animosities of sects and parties in politics and religion, and of contending chiefs and clans in war and intrigue. We feel the full force of the spirit of hatred with all of them in turn. As we read, we throw aside the trammels of civilisation, the flimsy veil of humanity. 'Off, you lendings!' The wild beast resumes its sway within us, we feel like hunting-animals, and as the hound starts in his sleep and rushes on the chase in fancy, the heart rouses itself in its native lair, and utters a wild cry of joy, at being restored once more to freedom and lawless, unrestrained impulses. Every one has his full swing, or goes to the Devil his own way. Here are no Jeremy Bentham Panopticons, none of Mr. Owen's impassable Parallelograms, (Rob Roy would have spurned and poured a thousand curses on them), no long calculations of self-interest—the will takes its instant way to its object; as the mountain-torrent flings itself over the precipice, the greatest possible good of each individual consists in doing all the mischief he can to his neighbour: that is charming, and finds a sure and sympathetic chord in every breast! So Mr. Irving, the celebrated preacher, has rekindled the old, original, almost exploded hell-fire in the aisles of the Caledonian Chapel, as they introduce the real water of the New River at Sadler's Wells, to the delight and astonishment of his fair audience. *'Tis pretty, though a plague*, to sit and peep into the pit of Tophet, to play at *snap-dragon* with flames and brimstone (it gives a smart electrical shock, a lively fillip to delicate constitutions), and to see Mr. Irving, like a huge Titan, looking as grim and swarthy as if he had to forge tortures for all the damned! What a strange being man is! Not content with doing all he can to vex and hurt his fellows here, 'upon this bank and shoal of time,' where one would think there were heart-aches, pain, disappointment, anguish, tears, sighs, and groans enough, the bigoted maniac takes him to the top of the high peak of school divinity to hurl him down

the yawning gulf of penal fire; his speculative malice asks eternity to wreak its infinite spite in, and calls on the Almighty to execute its relentless doom! The cannibals burn their enemies and eat them, in good-fellowship with one another: meek Christian divines cast those who differ from them but a hair's-breadth, body and soul, into hell-fire, for the glory of God and the good of his creatures! It is well that the power of such persons is not co-ordinate with their wills: indeed, it is from the sense of their weakness and inability to control the opinions of others, that they thus 'outdo termagant,' and endeavour to frighten them into conformity by big words and monstrous denunciations.

The pleasure of hating, like a poisonous mineral, eats into the heart of religion, and turns it to rankling spleen and bigotry; it makes patriotism an excuse for carrying fire, pestilence, and famine into other lands: it leaves to virtue nothing but the spirit of censoriousness, and a narrow, jealous, inquisitorial watchfulness over the actions and motives of others. What have the different sects, creeds, doctrines in religion been but so many pretexts set up for men to wrangle, to quarrel, to tear one another in pieces about, like a target as a mark to shoot at? Does any one suppose that the love of country in an Englishman implies any friendly feeling or disposition to serve another, bearing the same name? No, it means only hatred to the French, or the inhabitants of any other country that we happen to be at war with for the time. Does the love of virtue denote any wish to discover or amend our own faults? No, but it atones for an obstinate adherence to our own vices by the most virulent intolerance to human frailties. This principle is of a most universal application. It extends to good as well as evil: if it makes us hate folly, it makes us no less dissatisfied with distinguished merit. If it inclines us to resent the wrongs of others, it impels us to be as impatient of their prosperity. We revenge injuries: we repay benefits with ingratitude. Even our strongest partialities and likings soon take this turn. 'That which was luscious as locusts, anon becomes bitter as coloquintida;' and love and friendship melt in their own fires. We hate old friends: we hate old books: we hate old opinions; and at last we come to hate ourselves.

I have observed that few of those, whom I have formerly known most intimate, continue on the same friendly footing, or combine the steadiness with the warmth of attachment. I have been acquainted with two or three knots of inseparable companions, who saw each other 'six days in the week,' that have broken up and dispersed. I have quarrelled with almost all my old friends, (they might say this is owing to my bad temper, but) they have also quarrelled with

one another. What is become of 'that set of whist-players,' celebrated by ELIA in his notable *Epistle to Robert Southey, Esq.* (and now I think of it—that I myself have celebrated in this very volume) 'that for so many years called Admiral Burney friend?' They are scattered, like last year's snow. Some of them are dead—or gone to live at a distance—or pass one another in the street like strangers; or if they stop to speak, do it as coolly and try to *cut* one another as soon as possible. Some of us have grown rich—others poor. Some have got places under Government—others a *niche* in the Quarterly Review. Some of us have dearly earned a name in the world; whilst others remain in their original privacy. We despise the one; and envy and are glad to mortify the other. Times are changed; we cannot revive our old feelings; and we avoid the sight and are uneasy in the presence of those, who remind us of our infirmity, and put us upon an effort at seeming cordiality, which embarrasses ourselves and does not impose upon our *quondam* associates. Old friendships are like meats served up repeatedly, cold, comfortless, and distasteful. The stomach turns against them. Either constant intercourse and familiarity breed weariness and contempt; or if we meet again after an interval of absence, we appear no longer the same. One is too wise, another too foolish for us; and we wonder we did not find this out before. We are disconcerted and kept in a state of continual alarm by the wit of one, or tired to death of the dullness of another. The *good things* of the first (besides leaving stings behind them) by repetition grow stale, and lose their startling effect; and the insipidity of the last becomes intolerable. The most amusing or instructive companion is at best like a favourite volume, that we wish after a time to *lay upon the shelf*; but as our friends are not willing to be laid there, this produces a misunderstanding and ill-blood between us.—Or if the zeal and integrity of friendship is not abated, or its career interrupted by any obstacle arising out of its own nature, we look out for other subjects of complaint and sources of dissatisfaction. We begin to criticise each other's dress, looks, and general character. 'Such a one is a pleasant fellow, but it is a pity he sits so late!' Another fails to keep his appointments, and that is a sore that never heals. We get acquainted with some fashionable young men or with a mistress, and wish to introduce our friend; but he is awkward and a sloven, the interview does not answer, and this throws cold water on our intercourse. Or he makes himself obnoxious to opinion—and we shrink from our own convictions on the subject as an excuse for not defending him. All or any of these causes mount up in time to a ground of coolness or irritation—and at last they



break out into open violence as the only amends we can make ourselves for suppressing them so long, or the readiest means of banishing recollections of former kindness, so little compatible with our present feelings. We may try to tamper with the wounds or patch up the carcase of departed friendship, but the one will hardly bear the handling, and the other is not worth the trouble of embalming! The only way to be reconciled to old friends is to part with them for good: at a distance we may chance to be thrown back (in a waking dream) upon old times and old feelings: or at any rate, we should not think of renewing our intimacy, till we have fairly *spit our spite*, or said, thought, and felt all the ill we can of each other. Or if we can pick a quarrel with some one else, and make him the scape-goat, this is an excellent contrivance to heal a broken bone. I think I must be friends with Lamb again, since he has written that magnanimous Letter to Southey, and told him a piece of his mind!—I don't know what it is that attaches me to H—— so much, except that he and I, whenever we meet, sit in judgment on another set of old friends, and 'carve them as a dish fit for the Gods.' There was L— H——, John Scott, Mrs. ——, whose dark raven locks made a picturesque background to our discourse, B——, who is grown fat, and is, they say, married, R——; these had all separated long ago, and their foibles are the common link that holds us together. We do not affect to condole or whine over their follies; we enjoy, we laugh at them till we are ready to burst our sides, '*sans* intermission, for hours by the dial.' We serve up a course of anecdotes, *traits*, master-strokes of character, and cut and hack at them till we are weary. Perhaps some of them are even with us. For my own part, as I once said, I like a friend the better for having faults that one can talk about. 'Then,' said Mrs. ——, 'you will never cease to be a philanthropist!' Those in question were some of the choice-spirits of the age, not 'fellows of no mark or likelihood;' and we so far did them justice: but it is well they did not hear what we sometimes said of them. I care little what any one says of me, particularly behind my back, and in the way of critical and analytical discussion —it is looks of dislike and scorn, that I answer with the worst venom of my pen. The expression of the face wounds me more than the expressions of the tongue. If I have in one instance mistaken this expression, or resorted to this remedy where I ought not, I am sorry for it. But the face was too fine over which it mantled, and I am too old to have misunderstood it! . . . I sometimes go up to ——'s; and as often as I do, resolve never to go again. I do not find the old homely welcome. The ghost of friendship meets me at the door, and sits with me all dinner-time. They have got a set of

fine notions and new acquaintance. Allusions to past occurrences are thought trivial, nor is it always safe to touch upon more general subjects. M. does not begin as he formerly did every five minutes, 'Fawcett used to say,' &c. That topic is something worn. The girls are grown up, and have a thousand accomplishments. I perceive there is a jealousy on both sides. They think I give myself airs, and I fancy the same of them. Every time I am asked, 'If I do not think Mr. Washington Irvine a very fine writer?' I shall not go again till I receive an invitation for Christmas-day in company with Mr. Liston. The only intimacy I never found to flinch or fade was a purely intellectual one. There was none of the cant of candour in it, none of the whine of mawkish sensibility. Our mutual acquaintance were considered merely as subjects of conversation and knowledge, not at all of affection. We regarded them no more in our experiments than 'mice in an air-pump:' or like malefactors, they were regularly cut down and given over to the dissecting-knife. We spared neither friend nor foe. We sacrificed human infirmities at the shrine of truth. The skeletons of character might be seen, after the juice was extracted, dangling in the air like flies in cobwebs: or they were kept for future inspection in some refined acid. The demonstration was as beautiful as it was new. There is no surfeiting on gall: nothing keeps so well as a decoction of spleen. We grow tired of every thing but turning others into ridicule, and congratulating ourselves on their defects.

We take a dislike to our favourite books, after a time, for the same reason. We cannot read the same works for ever. Our honey-moon, even though we wed the Muse, must come to an end; and is followed by indifference, if not by disgust. There are some works, those indeed that produce the most striking effect at first by novelty and boldness of outline, that will not bear reading twice: others of a less extravagant character, and that excite and repay attention by a greater nicety of details, have hardly interest enough to keep alive our continued enthusiasm. The popularity of the most successful writers operates to wean us from them, by the cant and fuss that is made about them, by hearing their names everlastingly repeated, and by the number of ignorant and indiscriminate admirers they draw after them: —we as little like to have to drag others from their unmerited obscurity, lest we should be exposed to the charge of affectation and singularity of taste. There is nothing to be said respecting an author that all the world have made up their minds about: it is a thankless as well as hopeless task to recommend one that nobody has ever heard of. To cry up Shakespeare as the God of our idolatry, seems like a vulgar, national prejudice: to take down a volume of Chaucer, or

Spenser, or Beaumont and Fletcher, or Ford, or Marlowe, has very much the look of pedantry and egotism. I confess it makes me hate the very name of Fame and Genius when works like these are 'gone into the wastes of time,' while each successive generation of fools is busily employed in reading the trash of the day, and women of fashion gravely join with their waiting-maids in discussing the preference between Paradise Lost and Mr. Moore's Loves of the Angels. I was pleased the other day on going into a shop to ask, 'If they had any of the *Scotch Novels?*' to be told—'That they had just sent out the last, Sir Andrew Wylie!'—Mr. Galt will also be pleased with this answer! The reputation of some books is raw and *unaired:* that of others is worm-eaten and mouldy. Why fix our affections on that which we cannot bring ourselves to have faith in, or which others have long ceased to trouble themselves about? I am half afraid to look into Tom Jones, lest it should not answer my expectations at this time of day; and if it did not, I should certainly be disposed to fling it into the fire, and never look into another novel while I lived. But surely, it may be said, there are some works, that, like nature, can never grow old; and that must always touch the imagination and passions alike! Or there are passages that seem as if we might brood over them all our lives, and not exhaust the sentiments of love and admiration they excite: they become favourites, and we are fond of them to a sort of dotage. Here is one:

> '——— Sitting in my window
> Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a God,
> I thought (but it was you), enter our gates;
> My blood flew out and back again, as fast
> As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
> Like breath; then was I called away in haste
> To entertain you: never was a man
> Thrust from a sheepcote to a sceptre, raised
> So high in thoughts as I; you left a kiss
> Upon these lips then, which I mean to keep
> From you for ever. I did hear you talk
> Far above singing!'

A passage like this indeed leaves a taste on the palate like nectar, and we seem in reading it to sit with the Gods at their golden tables: but if we repeat it often in ordinary moods, it loses its flavour, becomes vapid, 'the wine of *poetry* is drank, and but the lees remain.' Or, on the other hand, if we call in the aid of extraordinary circumstances to set it off to advantage, as the reciting it to a friend,

or after having our feelings excited by a long walk in some romantic situation, or while we

> '—— play with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair'—

we afterwards miss the accompanying circumstances, and instead of transferring the recollection of them to the favourable side, regret what we have lost, and strive in vain to bring back 'the irrevocable hour'—wondering in some instances how we survive it, and at the melancholy blank that is left behind! The pleasure rises to its height in some moment of calm solitude or intoxicating sympathy, declines ever after, and from the comparison and a conscious falling-off, leaves rather a sense of satiety and irksomeness behind it. . . . 'Is it the same in pictures?' I confess it is, with all but those from Titian's hand. I don't know why, but an air breathes from his landscapes, pure, refreshing as if it came from other years; there is a look in his faces that never passes away. I saw one the other day. Amidst the heartless desolation and glittering finery of Fonthill, there is a portfolio of the Dresden Gallery. It opens, and a young female head looks from it; a child, yet woman grown; with an air of rustic innocence and the graces of a princess, her eyes like those of doves, the lips about to open, a smile of pleasure dimpling the whole face, the jewels sparkling in her crisped hair, her youthful shape compressed in a rich antique dress, as the bursting leaves contain the April buds! Why do I not call up this image of gentle sweetness, and place it as a perpetual barrier between mischance and me?—It is because pleasure asks a greater effort of the mind to support it than pain; and we turn, after a little idle dalliance, from what we love to what we hate!

As to my old opinions, I am heartily sick of them. I have reason, for they have deceived me sadly. I was taught to think, and I was willing to believe, that genius was not a bawd—that virtue was not a mask—that liberty was not a name—that love had its seat in the human heart. Now I would care little if these words were struck out of the dictionary, or if I had never heard them. They are become to my ears a mockery and a dream. Instead of patriots and friends of freedom, I see nothing but the tyrant and the slave, the people linked with kings to rivet on the chains of despotism and superstition. I see folly join with knavery, and together make up public spirit and public opinions. I see the insolent Tory, the blind Reformer, the coward Whig! If mankind had wished for what is right, they might have had it long ago. The theory is plain enough; but they are prone to mischief, 'to every good work reprobate.' I have seen all that had been done by the mighty

yearnings of the spirit and intellect of men, 'of whom the world was not worthy,' and that promised a proud opening to truth and good through the vista of future years, undone by one man, with just glimmering of understanding enough to feel that he was a king, but not to comprehend how he could be king of a free people! I have seen this triumph celebrated by poets, the friends of my youth and the friends of man, but who were carried away by the infuriate tide that, setting in from a throne, bore down every distinction of right reason before it; and I have seen all those who did not join in applauding this insult and outrage on humanity proscribed, hunted down (they and their friends made a bye-word of), so that it has become an understood thing that no one can live by his talents or knowledge who is not ready to prostitute those talents and that knowledge to betray his species, and prey upon his fellow-man. 'This was some time a mystery: but the time gives evidence of it.' The echoes of liberty had awakened once more in Spain, and the morning of human hope dawned again: but that dawn has been overcast by the foul breath of bigotry, and those reviving sounds stifled by fresh cries from the time-rent towers of the Inquisition—man yielding (as it is fit he should) first to brute force, but more to the innate perversity and dastard spirit of his own nature, which leaves no room for farther hope or disappointment. And England, that arch-reformer, that heroic deliverer, that mouther about liberty and tool of power, stands gaping by, not feeling the blight and mildew coming over it, nor its very bones crack and turn to a paste under the grasp and circling folds of this new monster, Legitimacy! In private life do we not see hypocrisy, servility, selfishness, folly, and impudence succeed, while modesty shrinks from the encounter, and merit is trodden under foot? How often is 'the rose plucked from the forehead of a virtuous love to plant a blister there!' What chance is there of the success of real passion? What certainty of its continuance? Seeing all this as I do, and unravelling the web of human life into its various threads of meanness, spite, cowardice, want of feeling, and want of understanding, of indifference towards others and ignorance of ourselves — seeing custom prevail over all excellence, itself giving way to infamy—mistaken as I have been in my public and private hopes, calculating others from myself, and calculating wrong; always disappointed where I placed most reliance; the dupe of friendship, and the fool of love; have I not reason to hate and to despise myself? Indeed I do; and chiefly for not having hated and despised the world enough.[1]

[1] The only exception to the general drift of this Essay (and that is an exception in theory—I know of none in practice) is, that in reading we always take the

ESSAY XIV

ON DR. SPURZHEIM'S THEORY

It appears to me that the truth of physiognomy (if we allow it) overturns the science of craniology. For instance, the system of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim supposes that every *bump* of protuberance on the skull is necessarily produced by an extraordinary protrusion of the brain or increase of the organ of perception immediately underneath it. Now behind a great part of the face we have no brain, and can have no such organs existing and accounting for the external phenomena; and yet here are projections or ramifications of bones, muscles, &c. which are allowed by these reasoners and most other persons to indicate character and intellect just as surely as the new-discovered organs of craniology. If then these projections or modifications of the countenance have such force and meaning where there is no brain underneath to account for them, is it not clear that in other cases the theory which assumes that such projections can only be caused by an extraordinary pressure of the brain, and of the appropriate local organ within, is in itself an obvious fallacy and contradiction? The long prudent chin, the scornful nose (*naso adunco*), the good-natured mouth, are proverbial in physiognomy, but are totally excluded from the organic system. I mentioned this objection once to Dr. Spurzheim personally, but he only replied—'We have treated of physiognomy in our larger work!' I was not satisfied with this answer.

right side, and make the case properly our own. Our imaginations are sufficiently excited, we have nothing to do with the matter but as a pure creation of the mind, and we therefore yield to the natural, unwarped impression of good and evil. Our own passions, interests, and prejudices out of the question, or in an abstracted point of view, we judge fairly and conscientiously; for conscience is nothing but the abstract idea of right and wrong. But no sooner have we to act or suffer, than the spirit of contradiction or some other demon comes into play, and there is an end of common sense and reason. Even the very strength of the speculative faculty, or the desire to square things with an *ideal* standard of perfection (whether we can or no) leads perhaps to half the absurdities and miseries of mankind. We are hunting after what we cannot find, and quarrelling with the good within our reach. Among the thousands that have read *The Heart of Midlothian* there assuredly never was a single person who did not wish Jeanie Deans success. Even Gentle George was sorry for what he had done, when it was over, though he would have played the same prank the next day: and the *unknown* author, in his immediate character of contributor to Blackwood and the Sentinel, is about as respectable a personage as Daddy Ratton himself. On the stage, every one takes part with Othello against Iago. Do boys at school, in reading Homer, generally side with the Greeks or Trojans?

I am utterly ignorant of the anatomical and physiological part of this question, and only propose to point out a few errors or defects in his system, which appear on the author's own showing, in the manner of marginal notes on the work. I would observe, by the bye, that the style and manner of the writer are not such as to induce the reader to place a very implicit reliance on his authority; and in a subject, which is so much an occult science, a *terra incognita* in the world of observation, depending on the traveller's report, authority is a good deal. The craniologist may make fools of his disciples at pleasure, unless he is an honest man. They have no check upon him. The face is as 'a book where men may read strange matters:' it is open to every one: the language of expression is as it were a kind of mother-tongue, in which every one acquires more or less tact, so that his own practical judgment forms a test to confirm or contradict the interpretation which is given of it. But the skull, on which Drs. Gall and Spurzheim have laid their hands for the discovery of so many important and undeniable truths, nobody else knows any thing about, except as they are pleased to tell us. It is concealed from ordinary observation by a covering of hair, and we must go by hearsay. We may indeed examine one or two individual instances, and grope out our way to truth in the dark; but there can be no habitual conclusion formed, no broad light of experience thrown upon the subject. The unbeliever in the fashionable system may well exclaim—

'Oh! let me perish in the face of day!'

The only opportunity for fairly studying this question was at the period when people wore artificial hair; for then any well-disposed person had only to pull off his wig, and *show you his mind.*[1] But the hair is a sort of natural mask to the head. The craniologist indeed 'draws the curtain, and shows the picture:' but if there is the least want of good faith in him, the science is all abroad again. Unfortunately for the credit due to his system, Dr. Spurzheim (or his predecessor, Dr. Gall, who got up the facts) has very much the air of a German quack-doctor. He is, so to speak it, the Baron Munchausen of marvellous metaphysics. His object is to astonish

[1] There is a fellow in Hogarth's *Election Dinner*, holding his wig in one hand, and wiping his bare scalp with the other. What a peep for a craniologist! Let him look well to it, and see that his system is borne out by the gesture, character, and actions of the portrait! A celebrated Scotch barrister being introduced to Dr. Spurzheim without his wig, said—'It is dangerous to appear before you, Doctor, at this disadvantage.' To which the Doctor replied—'Oh! you have nothing to fear. Your head——' 'At least,' interrupted the other, 'you will not find the organ of credulity there!'

the reader into belief, as jugglers make clowns gape and swallow whatever they please. He fabricates wonders with easy assurance, and deals in men 'whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, and the anthropophagi, that each other eat.' He readily admits whatever suits his purpose, and magisterially doubts whatever makes against it. He has a cant of credulity mixed up with the cant of scepticism—things not easily reconciled, except by a very deliberate effort indeed. There is something gross and fulsome in all this, that has tended to bring discredit on a system, which after all has probably some foundation in nature, but which is here overloaded with exaggerated and dogmatical assertions, warranted for facts. We doubt the whole, when we know a part to be false, and withhold our assent from a creed, the great apostle of which wants modesty, candour, and self-knowledge! Another thing to be considered, and in truth the great stumbling-block in the way of nearly the whole of this system, is this, that the principle of thought and feeling in man is one, whereas the present doctrine supposes it to be many. The mind is one, or it is infinite. If there is not some single, superintending faculty or conscious power to which all subordinate organic impressions are referred as to a centre, and which decides and reacts upon them all, then there is no end of particular organs, and there must be not only an organ for poetry, but an organ for poetry of every sort and size, and so of all the rest. This will be seen more at large when we come to details; but at present I wish to lay it down as a corner-stone or fundamental principle in the argument.

Of the way in which Dr. Spurzheim clears the ground before him, and disarms the incredulity of the reader by a string of undeniable or equivocal propositions blended together, the following may serve as a specimen.

'The doctrine, that every thing is provided with its own properties, was from time to time checked by metaphysicians and scholastic divines; but by degrees it gained ground, and the maxim that matter is inert was entirely refuted. Natural philosophers discovered corporeal properties, the laws of attraction and repulsion, of chemical affinity, of fermentation, and even of organization. They considered the phenomena of vegetables as the production of material qualities—as properties of matter. Glisson attributed to matter a particular activity, and to the animal fibre a specific irritability. De Gorter acknowledged in vegetable life something more than pure mechanism. Winter and Zups proved that the phenomena of vegetable life ought to be ascribed only to irritability. Of this, several phenomena of flowers and leaves indicate a great degree. The hop and French-bean twine round rods which are planted near them. The tendrils

of vines curl round poles or the branches of neighbouring trees. The ivy climbs the oak, and adheres to its sides, &c. Now it would be absurd to pretend that the organization of animals is entirely destitute of properties: therefore Frederick Hoffman took it for the basis of his system, that the human body, like all other bodies, is endowed with material properties.' Page 56.

'Here be truths,' but 'dashed and brewed with lies' or doubtful points. Yet they pass all together without discrimination or selection. There is a simplicity in many of the propositions amounting to a sort of *bonhommie*. There is an over-measure of candour and plainness. A man who gravely informs you, as an important philosophical discovery, that 'the tendrils of vines curl round poles,' and that 'the human body is endowed with material properties,' may escape without the imputation of intending to delude the unwary. But these kind of innocent pretences are like shoeing-horns to draw on the hardest consequences. By the serious offer of this meat for babes, you are prepared to swallow a horse-drench of parboiled paradoxes. You are thrown off your guard into a state of good-natured surprise, by the utter want of all meaning; and our craniologist catches his wondering disciples in a trap of truisms. Instances might be multiplied from this part of the work, where the writer is occupied in getting up the plot, and lulling asleep any suspicion, or feeling of petulance in the mind of the public. Just after, he says—

'In former times there were philosophers who thought that the soul forms its own body; but if this be the case, an ill-formed body never could be endowed with a good soul. All the natural influence of generation, nutrition, climate, education, &c. would *therefore* be inexplicable. *Hence*, it is much more reasonable to think that the soul, in this life, is only confined in the body, and makes use of its respective instruments, which entirely depend on the laws of the organization. In blindness, the soul is not mutilated, but it cannot perceive light without eyes, &c.' *with other matters of like pith and moment.* The author's style is interlarded with too many *hences* and *therefores*; neither do his inferences hang well together. They are ill-cemented. He announces instead of demonstrating; and jumps at a conclusion in a heavy, awkward way. He constantly assumes the point in dispute, or makes a difficulty on one side of a question a decisive proof of the opposite view of it. What credit can be attached to him in matters of fact or theory where he must have it almost all his own way, when he presumes so much on the *gullibility* of his readers in common argument? 'If these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'—Once more:

'No one will endeavour to prove that the five senses are the production of our will: their laws are determined by nature. *Therefore* as soon as an animal meets with the food destined for it, its smell and taste declare in favour of it. *Thus* it is not astonishing that a kid, taken from the uterus of its mother, preferred broom-tops to other vegetables which were presented to it. And Richerand is wrong in saying—"If such a fact have any reality, we should be forced to admit that an animal may possess a foreknowledge of what is proper for it; and that, independently of any impressions which may be afterwards received by the senses, it is capable, from the moment of birth, of choosing, that is, of comparing and judging of what is presented to it." The hog likewise eats the acorn the first time he finds it. Animals however have, on that account, no need of any previous exercise, of any innate idea, of any comparison or reflection. The relations between the external world and the five senses are determined by creation. We cannot see as red that which is yellow, nor as great that which is little. How should animals have any idea of what they have not felt?' Page 59.

This is what might be termed the *inclusive style* in argument. It is impossible to distinguish the premises from the conclusion. We have facts for arguments, and arguments for facts. He plays off a phantasmagoria of illustrations as proofs, like Sir Epicure Mammon in the Alchemist. It is like being in a round-about at a fair, or skating, or flying. It is not easy to make out even the terms of the question, so completely are they overlaid and involved one in the other, and that, as it should seem, purposely, or from a habit of confounding the plainest things. To proceed, however, to something more material. In treating of innate faculties, Dr. Spurzheim runs the following career, which will throw considerable light on the vagueness and contradictoriness of his general mode of reasoning.

'Now it is beyond doubt, that all the instinctive aptitudes and inclinations of animals are innate. Is it not evident that the faculties by which the spider makes its web, the honeybee its cell, the beaver its hut, the bird its nest, &c. are inherent in the nature of these animals? When the young duck or tortoise runs towards the water as soon as hatched, when the bird brushes the worm with its bill, when the monkey, before he eats the may-bug, bites off its head, &c. all these and similar dispositions are conducive to the preservation of the animals; but they are not at all acquired.'

If by *acquired*, be meant that these last acts do not arise out of certain impressions made on the senses by different objects, (such as the agreeable or disagreeable smell of food, &c.) this is by no means either clear or acknowledged on all hands.

'According to the same law,' he adds, [What law?] 'the hamster gathers corn and grain, the dog hides his superfluous food'—[This at any rate seems a rational act.]—'the falcon kills the hare by driving his beak into its neck,' &c.

'In the same way, all instinctive manifestations of man must be innate. The new-born child sucks the fingers and seeks the breast, as the puppy and calf seek the dug.'

The circumstance here indiscreetly mentioned of the child sucking the fingers as well as the nipple, certainly does away the idea of *final causes*. It shows that the child, from a particular state of irritation of its mouth, fastens on any object calculated to allay that irritation, whether conducive to its sustenance or not. It is difficult sometimes to get children to take the breast. Dr. S. takes up a common prejudice, without any qualification or inquiry, while it suits his purpose, and lays it down without ceremony when it no longer serves the turn. He proceeds—

'*I have mentioned above, that voluntary motion and the five external senses, common to man and animals, are innate.* Moreover, if man and animals feel certain propensities and sentiments *with clear and distinct consciousness*, we must consider these faculties as innate.'—[The *clear and distinct consciousness* has nothing to do with the matter.]—'Thus, if in animals we find examples of mutual inclination between the sexes, of maternal care for the young, of attachment, of mutual assistance, of sociableness, of union for life, of peaceableness, of desire to fight, of propensity to destroy, of circumspection, of slyness, of love of flattery, of obstinacy, &c. all these faculties must be considered as innate.'—[A finer assumption of the question than this, or a more complete jumble of instincts and acquired propensities together, never was made. The author has here got hold of a figure called *encroachment*, and advances accordingly!]—'Let all these faculties be ennobled in man: let animal instinct of propagation be changed into moral love; the inclination of animals for their young into the virtue of maternal care for children; animal attachment into friendship; animal susceptibility of flattery into love of glory and ambition; the nightingale's melody into harmony; the bird's nest and the beaver's hut into palaces and temples, &c.: these faculties are still of the same nature, and all these phenomena are produced by faculties common to man and animals. They are only ennobled in man by the influence of superior qualities, which give another direction to the inferior ones.' Page 82.

This last passage appears to destroy his whole argument. For the Doctor contends that every particular propensity or modification of the mind must be innate, and have its separate organ; but if there

are 'faculties common to man and animals,' which are ennobled or debased by their connexion with other faculties, then we must admit a general principle of thought and action varying according to circumstances, and the organic system becomes nearly an impertinence.

The following short section, entitled INNATENESS OF THE HUMAN FACULTIES, will serve to place in a tolerably striking point of view the turn of this writer to an unmeaning, *quackish* sort of common-place reasoning.

'Finally, man is endowed with faculties which are peculiar to him. Now it is to be investigated, whether the faculties which distinguish man from animals, and which constitute his human character, are innate. It must be answered, that all the faculties of man are given by creation, and that human nature is as determinate as that of every other being. Thus, though we see that man compares his sensations and ideas, inquires into the causes of phenomena, draws consequences and discovers laws and general principles; that he measures distances and times, and crosses the sea from one end to another; that he acknowledges culpability and worthiness; that he bears a monitor in his own breast, and raises his mind to the idea and adoration of God:—yet all these faculties result neither from accidental influence from without, nor from his own will. How indeed could the Creator abandon man in the greatest and most important occupations, and give him up to chance? No!' Page 83.

No, indeed; but there is a difference between *chance* and a number of bumps on the head. One would think that all this, being common to the same being, proceeded from a general faculty manifesting itself in different ways, and not from a parcel of petty faculties huddled together nobody knows how, and acting without concert or coherence. Does man cross the seas, measure the heavens, construct telescopes, &c. from a general capacity of invention in the mind, or does the navigator lie *perdu*, shut up like a Jack-in-a-box in one corner of the brain, the mechanic in another, the astronomer in another, and so forth? That is the simple question. Dr. Spurzheim adds shortly after—

'We every where find the same species; whether man stain his skin, or powder his hair; whether he dance to the sound of a drum or to the music of a concert; whether he adore the stars, the sun, the moon, or the God of Christians. The special faculties are every where the same.' Page 85.

He ought to have said the *general* faculties are the same, not the *special*. But if there is not a specific faculty and organ for every act of the mind and object in nature, then Dr. Spurzheim must admit the existence of a general faculty modified by circumstances, and we must

be slow in accounting for different phenomena from particular independent organs, without the most obvious proofs or urgent necessity. His organs are too few or too many.

'Malebranche,' says our author, 'deduces the different manner of thinking and feeling in men and women from the different delicacy of the cerebral fibres. According to our doctrine, certain parts of the brain are more developed in men, others in women; and in that way is the difference of the manifestations of their faculties perfectly explicable.' Page 105.

For my part, I prefer Malebranche's solution to the more modern one. It seems to me that the strength or weakness, the pliancy or firmness of the characters of men or women is to be accounted for from something in the general texture of their minds, just as their corporeal strength or weakness, activity or grace is to be accounted for from something in the general texture of their bodies, and not from the arbitrary preponderance of this or that particular limb or muscle. I think the analogy is conclusive against our author. If there is no difference of *quality; i.e.* of delicacy, firmness, &c. in the parts of the brain 'more developed in men,' the difference of *quantity* alone cannot account for the difference of character. And, on the other hand, if we allow such a difference of quality in the cerebral fibres, or of hardness and softness, flexibility or sluggishness in the whole brain, we shall have no occasion for particular bumps or organs of the brain to account for the difference in the minds of men and women generally. Drs. Gall and Spurzheim seem desirous to set aside all differences of texture, irritability, tenacity, &c. in the composition of the brain, as if these were *occult* qualities, and to reduce every thing to positive and ostensible quantity; not considering that quantity alone accounts for no difference of character or operation. The increasing the size of the organ of music, for instance, will not qualify that organ to perform the functions of the organ of colour: there must be a natural aptitude in *kind*, before we talk about the degree or excess of the faculty resulting from the peculiar conformation of a given part. The piling up larger parcels of the same materials of the brain will not produce a new faculty: we must include the nature of the different materials, and it is not too much to assume that whenever the faculty is available to a number of purposes, the difference in the nature of the thinking substance cannot be merely *local* or organic. For instance, say that the *Organ of Memory* is distinguished by greater tenaciousness of particles, or by something correspondent to this; that in like manner, the *Organ of Fancy* is distinguished by greater irritability of structure; is it not better to suppose that the first character pervades the brain of a man remark-

able for strong memory, and the last that of another person excelling in fancy, generally and primarily, instead of supposing that the whole retentiveness of the brain is in the first instance lodged in one particular compartment of it, and the whole volatility or liveliness, in the second instance, imprisoned in another hole or corner, with quite as little reason? It may be said, that the organ in question is not an organ of memory in general, but of the memory of some particular thing. Then this will require that there should be an organ of memory of every other particular thing; an organ of invention, and an organ of judgment of the same; which is too much to believe, and besides can be of no use: for unless in addition to these separate organs, over which is written—'No connexion with the next door'—we have some general organ or faculty, receiving information, comparing ideas, and arranging our volitions, there can be no one homogeneous act or exercise of the understanding, no one art attained, or study engaged in. There will either be a number of detached objects and sensations without a mind to superintend them, or else a number of minds for every distinct object, without any common link of intelligence among themselves. In the first case, each organ would be that of a mere brute instinct, that could never arrive at the dignity of any one art or science, as painting or music; in the second case, no art or science (such as poetry) ever could exist that implied a comparison between any two ideas or the impressions of different organs, as of sight and sound.

Dr. Spurzheim observes, (page 107) 'The child advances to boyhood, adolescence, and manhood. Then all these faculties manifest the greatest energy. By degrees they begin to decrease; and in the decrepitude of old age, the sensations are blunted, the sentiments weak, and the intellectual faculties almost or entirely suppressed. Hence, as the manifestations of the faculties of the mind and understanding are proportionate to the organization, it is evident that they depend on it.'

I do not see the exact inference meant to be drawn here. All the conditions above enumerated affect the whole brain generally. There is not an organ of youth, of manhood, of decrepitude, &c.

'A brain too small, however, is always accompanied with imbecility. Willis described the brain of one who was an idiot from birth. It was not more than half the size of an ordinary brain.' Page 109.

At this rate, if there are idiots by birth, there must be also such a thing as general capacity.

'I have seen two twin-boys so like each other, that it was almost impossible to distinguish them. Their inclinations and talents presented also a striking and astonishing similitude. Two others,

twin-sisters, are very different: in the one the muscular system is the most developed, in the other the nervous. The former is of little understanding, whereas the second is endowed with strong intellectual faculties.' Page 112.

This is coming to Malebranche's way of putting the question. In the same page we find the following *morceau*:—

'Gaubius relates, that a girl, whose father had killed men in order to eat them, and who was separated from her father in her infancy and carefully educated, committed the same crime. Gaubius drew from this fact the consequence, that the faculties are propagated with the organization.'—Good Gaubius Gobbo! Without believing his fact, we need not dispute his consequence.

'Malebranche explains the difference of the faculties of both sexes, the various kinds and particular tastes of different nations and individuals, by the firmness and softness, dryness and moisture of the cerebral fibres; and he remarks that our time cannot be better employed than in investigating the material causes of human phenomena. The Cartesians, by their doctrine of the tracks which they admit in the brain, acknowledge the influence of the brain on the intellectual faculties.' Page 118.

Dr. Spurzheim altogether explodes the doctrine of a difference in constitutional temperaments, the sanguine, the phlegmatic, and so on; because this difference, being general, is not consistent with his special organs. He also denies unequivocally the doctrine of the association of ideas, which Des Cartes's 'tracks in the brain' were meant to explain. One would think this alone decisive against his book. Indeed the capacity of association, possessed in a greater or less degree, seems to be the great discriminating feature between man and man. But what *organ of association* there can be between different *local* organs it is difficult to conjecture; and Dr. Spurzheim was right in boldly denying a truth which he could not reconcile with his mechanical and incongruous theory.

'There are persons who maintain that in the highest degree of magnetic influence, the manifestations of the soul are independent of the organization.' Page 122.

What! have we animal magnetism in the dance too? Would our great physiologist awe us into belief by bringing into the field quackery greater than his own? Then it is time to be on our guard.

'We find sanguine and bilious individuals, who are intellectual or stupid, meek or impetuous; we may observe phlegmatics of a bold, quarrelsome, and imperious character. In short, the doctrine of the temperaments, as applied to the indication of determinate faculties, is

not more sure or better founded, than divination by the hands, feet, skin, hair, ears, and similar physiognomical signs.' Page 128.

That is, red-haired people, for instance, have not a certain general character. After that, I will not believe a word the learned author says upon his bare authority.

Dr. Spurzheim with great formality devotes a number of sections to prove that the several senses alone, without any other faculty or principle of thought and feeling, do not account for the moral and intellectual faculties. 'There needs no ghost to tell us that.' In his mode of entering upon this part of his subject, the Doctor seems to have been aware of the old maxim—*Divide et impera*—Distinguish and confound!

'We have still to examine whether sight produces any moral sentiment or intellectual faculty. It is a common opinion that the art of painting is the result of sight; and it is true that eyes are necessary to perceive colours, as the ears are to perceive sounds and tones; but the art of painting does not consist in the perception of colours, any more than music in the perception of sounds. Sight, therefore, and the faculty of painting are not at all in proportion. The sight of many animals is more perfect than that of man, but they do not know what painting is; and in mankind the talent of painting cannot be measured by the acuteness of sight. Great painters never attribute their talent to their eyes. They say, it is not the eye, but the understanding, which perceives the harmony of colours.' Page 158.

This is well put, and quite true; that is, it is the mind alone that perceives the relation and connexion between all our sensations. Thus the impression of the line bounding one side of the face does not perceive or compare itself with the impression of the line forming the other side of the face, but it is the mind or understanding (by means indeed of the eye) that perceives and compares the two impressions together. But neither will an *organ of painting* answer this purpose, unless this separate organ includes a separate *mind*, with a complete workshop and set of offices to execute all the departments of judgment, taste, invention, &c. *i.e.* to compare, analyse, and combine its own particular sensations. But neither will this answer the end. For either all these must be included under one, and exhibit themselves in the same proportions wherever the organ exists, which is not the fact; or if they are distinct and independent of one another, then they cannot be expressed by any one organ. Dr. Spurzheim has, in a subsequent part of his work, provided for this objection, and divided the *Organ of Sight* into five or six subdivisions; such as, the *Organ of Form*, the *Organ of Colour*, the *Organ of Weight*, the *Organ of Space*, and God knows how many more. This is

evading and at the same time increasing the difficulty. Thus. The best draughtsmen are not observed to be always the best colourists, Raphael and Titian for example. There must therefore be a new division of the *Organ of Sight* into (at least) the two divisions of Form and Colour. Now it is not to be supposed that these organs are thus separated merely for separation's sake, but that there is something in the quality or texture of the substance of the brain in each organ, peculiarly fitted for each different sort of impression, and by an excess of quantity producing an excess of faculty. The *size* alone of the organ cannot account for the difference of the faculty, without this other condition of quality annexed. Suppose the distinguishing quality of the *organ of form* to be a certain tenaciousness; that of the *organ of colour* to be a certain liquid softness in the finer particles of the brain. Now a greater quantity of the medullary substance of a given texture and degree of softness will produce the *organ of colour*: but then will not a greater degree of this peculiar softness or texture (whatever it is) with the same quantity of substance, produce an extraordinary degree of faculty equally? That is, we make the fineness or quality of the nerves, brain, mind, atone for the want of quantity, or get the faculty universally without the organ: Q. E. D. Dr. Spurzheim does not make an organ of melody and an organ of harmony; yet he ought, if every distinct operation of the mind or senses requires a distinct local organ, and if his whole system is not merely arbitrary. Farther, one part of painting is *expression*, namely, the power of connecting certain feelings of pleasure and pain with certain lines and movements of face; that is, there ought to be an *organ of expression*, or an organ, in the first place, of pleasure and pain—which Dr. Spurzheim denies—these being general and not specific manifestations of the mind; and in the second place, an organ for associating the impressions of one organ with those of all the rest—of which the Doctor also denies the existence or even possibility. His is quite a new constitution of the human mind.

'Finally, every one feels that he thinks by means of the brain.' Page 165.

When it was urged before, that every one thinks that he feels by means of the heart, Dr. Spurzheim scouted this sort of proof as vulgar and ridiculous, it being then against himself.

'Tiedeman relates the example of one Moser, who was insane on one side of his head, and who observed his madness with the other side. Gall attended a minister who had a similar disease *for three years*. He heard constantly on his left side reproaches and injuries; he turned his head on this side, and looked at the persons.'—[What persons?]—'With his right side he *commonly* judged the madness of

his left side; but sometimes *in a fit of fever* he could not rectify his peculiar state. Long after being cured, if he happened to be angry, or if he had drunk more than he was accustomed to do, he observed in his left side a tendency to his former alienation.' Page 171.

This is an amusing book after all. One might collect from it materials for a new edition of the *Wonderful Magazine*. How familiarly the writer insinuates the most incredible stories, and takes for granted the minutest circumstances! This style, though it may incline the credulous to gape and swallow everything, must make the judicious grieve, and the wary doubt.

'It is however necessary to remark, that all observations of this kind can only be made upon beings of the same species, and it is useless to compare the same faculty with the respective organ in different species of animals. *The irritability is very different in different kinds of animals.*' Page 205.

And why not in the same kind?

'The state of disease proves also the plurality of the organs. For how is it possible to combine partial insanities with the unity of the brain? A chemist was a madman in everything but chemistry. An embroiderer in her fits, and in the midst of the greatest absurdities, calculated perfectly how much stuff was necessary to such or such a piece of work.' Page 219.

Does our author mean that there is an organ of chemistry, and an organ for embroidery? King Ferdinand would be a good subject to ascertain this last observation upon. If I could catch him, I should be disposed to try. I would not let him go, like the Cortes.

'The external apparatus of the nerves of the five senses are said to be different, because they receive different impressions: but how is it possible that different impressions should be transmitted to the brain by the same nerves? How can the impressions of light be propagated by the auditory nerve?' Page 227.

We only know that they are not. But how, we might ask, can the different impressions of sight—as red, yellow, blue—be transmitted by the same nerve?

'Plattner made the following objection:—"A musician plays with his fingers on all instruments; why should not the soul manifest all its operations by means of one and the same organ?" This observation is rather for than against the plurality of the organs. First, there are ten fingers which play: moreover, the instruments present different chords or holes. We admit only one organ for music; and all kinds of music are produced by this organ. Hence, this assertion of Plattner does not invalidate our theory.' Page 230.

But it does though, unless you could show that a musician can

play only as many tunes as he has fingers, on the same kind of instrument. Dr. Spurzheim contends elsewhere that one organ can perform only one function, and brings as a proof of the plurality of the organs the alternate action and rest of the body and mind. But if the same organ cannot undergo a different state, how can it rest? There must then be an organ of action and an organ of rest, an organ to do something and an organ to do nothing! Very fine and clear all this.

The following passages seem to bear closest upon the general question, and I shall apply myself to answer them as well as I can.

'The intellectual faculties have been placed in the brain; but it was impossible to point out any organ, because organs have been sought for faculties which have no organ, namely, for common and general faculties . . . General or common phenomena never have any particular organ. Secretion, for instance, is a common name, and secretion in general has no particular organ; but the particular secretions, as of saliva, bile, tears, &c. are attached to particular organs. Sensation is an expression which indicates the common function of the five external senses; therefore this common faculty has no particular organ, but every determinate sensation—as of sight, hearing, smelling, taste, or feeling—is attached to some particular organ.' Page 273.

In the first place, then, Dr. Spurzheim himself assigns particular organs for common and general faculties; such as self-love, veneration, hope, covetousness, language, comparison, causality, wit, imitation, &c. He also talks of the organs of abstraction, individuality, invention, &c. It would be hard to deny that these mean more than one thing and refer to more than to one class of sensations. In fact, the author all through his volume regularly confounds general principles with particular acts and mechanic exercises of the mind. Secondly, he either does not or will not apprehend the precise meaning of the terms *common* or *general faculties*, as applied to the mind. *Sensation* is a common function of the five external senses, that is, it belongs severally to the exercise of the five external senses: but *understanding* is a common faculty of the mind—not because it belongs to any number of ideas in succession, but because it takes cognizance of a number of them together. UNDERSTANDING is perceiving the relations between objects and impressions, which the senses and particular or individual organs can never do. It is this superintending or *conscious* faculty or principle which is aware both of the colour, form, and sound of an object; which connects its present appearance with its past history; which arranges and combines the multifarious impressions of nature into one whole;

which balances the various motives of action, and renders man what he is—a rational and moral agent: but for this faculty we find no regular place or station assigned amongst that heap of organic *tumuli*, which could produce nothing but mistakes and confusion. The seat of this faculty is one, or its impressions are communicated to the same intelligent mind, which contemplates and reacts upon them all with more or less wisdom and comprehensive power. Thus the poet is not a being made up of a string of organs—an eye, an ear, a heart, a tongue—but is one and the same intellectual essence, looking out from its own nature on all the different impressions it receives, and to a certain degree moulding them into itself. It is *I* who remember certain objects, who judge of them, who invent from them, who connect certain sounds that I hear, as of a thrush singing, with certain sights that I see, as the wood whence the notes issue. There is some bond, some conscious connexion brought about between these impressions and acts of the mind; that is, there is a principle of joint and common understanding in the mind, quite different from the ignorance in which the ear is left of what passes before the eye, &c. and which overruling and primary faculty of the soul, blending with all our thoughts and feelings, Dr. Spurzheim does not once try to explain, but does all he can to overturn.

'Understanding,' he continues, 'being an expression which designates a general faculty, has no particular organ, but every determinate species of understanding is attached to a particular organ.' *Ibid.*

If so, how does it contrive to compare notes with the impressions of other particular organs? For example, how does the organ of wit combine with the organ of form or of individuality, to give a grotesque description of a particular person, without some common and intermediate faculty to which these several impressions are consciously referred? Will any one tell me that one of these detached and very particular organs perceives the stained *colour* of an old cloak—[How would it apprehend any thing of the *age* of the cloak?]—that another has a glimpse of its antiquated *form*; that a third supplies a *witty* allusion or apt *illustration* of what it knows nothing about; and that this patchwork process is clubbed by a number of organic impressions that have no law of subordination, nor any common principle of reference between them, to make a lively caricature?

'Finally, it is the same with all common faculties of the understanding—of which philosophers and physiologists speak—namely, with *perception*, *memory*, or *recollection*, *judgment*, and *imagination*. These expressions are common, and the respective faculties have



no organs; but every peculiar perception—memory, judgment, and imagination—as of space, form, colour, tune, and number, have their particular organs. If the common faculties of understanding were attached to particular organs, the person who possesses the organ of any common faculty ought to be endowed with all particular kinds of faculties. If there were an organ of perception, of memory, of judgment, or of imagination, any one who has the organ of perception, of memory, of judgment, or of imagination, ought to possess all kinds of perception, of memory, of judgment, or of imagination. Now this is against all experience.' *Ibid.*

No more, than a person possessed of the general organ of sight must be acquainted equally with all objects of sight, whether they have ever fallen in his way, or whether he has studied them or not. But it is according to all experience, that some persons are distinguished more by memory, others more by judgment, others more by imagination, generally speaking. That is, upon whatever subject they exercise their attention, they show the same turn of mind or predominating faculty. Some people do every thing from impulse. It is their character under all impressions and in all studies and pursuits. Is there then an organ of impulse? An organ of tune is intelligible, because it denotes a general faculty exercised upon a particular class of impressions, *viz.* sounds. But what is an organ of wit? It means nothing; for it denotes a faculty without any specific objects: and yet *an organ* means a faculty limited to specific objects. Wit is the faculty of combining suddenly and glancing over the whole range of art and nature; but an organ is shut up in a particular cell of sensation, and sees nothing beyond itself.

'One has a great memory of one kind,' proceeds our author, 'and a very little memory of other things.'

Yes, partly from habit, but chiefly, I grant, from original character; not because certain things strike upon a certain part of the brain, but touch a certain quality or disposition of the mind. Thus, some remember trifles, others things of importance. Some retain forms, others feelings. Some have a memory of words, others of things. Some remember what regards their own interests, others what is interesting in itself, according to the bias and scope of their sensibility. All these results depend evidently not on a particular local impression, but on a variety of general causes combined in one common effect. Again: 'a poet possesses one kind of imagination in a high degree; but has he therefore every kind of imagination, as that of inventing machines, of composing music, &c.?' Page 275.

Or it may be retorted—Has he therefore every kind of poetical imagination? Does the same person write epigrams and epics,

comedies and tragedies? Is there not light and serious poetry? Is not Mr. T. Moore just as likely to become Newton as to become Milton? Or as the wren the eagle? Yet Dr. Spurzheim has but one organ for poetry, as he says—'We allow but one organ for tune.' But is there not tune in poetry? Has not the poet an ear as well as the musician? How then does the author reconcile these common or analogous qualities, and the complex impressions from all the senses implied in poetry (for instance) with his detached, circumscribed, *local* organs? His system is merely *nominal*, and a very clumsy specimen of nomenclature into the bargain.—Poetry relates to all sorts of impressions, from all sorts of objects, moral and physical. Music relates to one sort of impressions only, and so far there is an excuse for assigning it to a particular organ; but it also implies common and general faculties, such as retention, judgment, invention, &c. which essentially reside in the understanding or thinking principle at large. But suppose them to be cooped and cabined up in the particular organ:—do they not exist in different degrees, and is this difference expressed merely by the size of the organ?—It cannot be. The circumstance of size can only determine that such a one is a great musician; not what sort of a musician he is. Therefore this characteristic difference is not expressed by quantity, and therefore none of the differences themselves, or faculties of judgment, invention, refinement, &c. which form the great musician, can be expressed by quantity; and if none of these component parts of musical genius are so expressed, why then 'it follows, as the night the day,' that there can be no organ of music. There may be an organ peculiarly adapted for retaining musical impressions, but this (without including the intellectual operations, which is impossible) would only answer the purposes of a peculiarly fine and sensitive ear.

'Natural philosophers were wrong in looking for organs of common faculties.'—[*That's* true.]—'A speculative philosopher may be satisfied with vague and common expressions, which do not denote the particular and determinate qualities of the different beings; but these general or common considerations are not sufficient for a naturalist who endeavours to know the functions and faculties of every organic part in particular. Throughout all natural history, the expressions are the less significant the more general or common they are; and a distinct knowledge of any being requires a study of its peculiarities.' Page 275.

Take away the human mind and its common functions, operations, and principles, and Dr. Spurzheim's craniology gives a very satisfactory and categorical view of human nature. In material science, the common properties may be the least significant; but in the mind

There may be different organs to receive different material or concrete impressions, but surely only the mind can abstract the different impressions of the same sense from each other. The *organ of space* appears to me to answer to the look of wild, staring curiosity. All that is not accounted for in this way, either from general conformation or from physiognomical expression, is a heap of crude, capricious, unauthenticated trash. I select one paragraph out of this puzzling chaos, as a sample of what the reader must expect from the whole.

'What then is the *special* faculty of the organ of *individuality* and its sphere of activity? Persons endowed with this faculty in a high degree are attentive to *all* that happens around them; to every object, to every phenomenon, to every fact: *hence also to motions*. This faculty neither learns the qualities of objects, nor *the details* of facts: it knows only their existence. The qualities of the objects, and the particularities of the facts, are known by the assistance of other organs. *Besides*, this faculty has knowledge of *all internal faculties, and acts upon them*. It wishes to know all by experience; consequently it puts every organ into action: it wishes to hear, see, smell, taste, and touch; *to know all arts and sciences*; it is fond of instruction, collects facts, and leads to practical knowledge.' Page 430.

In the next page he affirms that 'crystallography is the result of the organ of form,' and that we do not get the ideas of roughness and smoothness from the touch.—But I will end here, and turn to the amusing account of Dousterswivel in the ANTIQUARY![1]

[1] It appears, I understand, from an ingenious paper published by Dr. Combe of Edinburgh, that three heads have caused considerable uneasiness and consternation to a *Society of Phrenologists* in that city, *viz.* those of Sir Walter Scott, of the Duke of Wellington, and of Marshal Blucher. The first, contrary to the expectation of these learned persons, wants the organ of imagination; the second the organ of combination; and the last possesses the organ of fancy. This, I confess, as to the two first, appears to me a needless alarm. It would incline me (more than any thing I have yet heard) to an opinion that there is something like an art of divination in the science. I had long ago formed and been hardy enough to express a conviction that Sir Walter's *forte* is a sort of *traditional literature* (whatever he accumulates or scatters through his pages, he leaves as he finds it, with very few marks of the master-mind upon it)—and as to the second person mentioned, he has just those powers of combination which belong to a man who leads a bull-dog in a string, and lets the animal loose upon his prey at the proper moment. With regard to Prince Blucher, if he had not '*fancy* in himself, he was the cause of it in others,' for he turned the heads of many people, who 'fancied' his campaigns were the precursors of the Millennium. I have at different times seen these three puzzling heads, and I should say that the Poet looks like a gentleman-farmer, the Prince like a corporal on guard, or the lieutenant of a press-gang, the Duke like nothing or nobody. You look at the head of the first

ESSAY XV

ON EGOTISM

It is mentioned in the Life of Salvator Rosa, that on the occasion of an altar-piece of his being exhibited at Rome, in the triumph of the moment, he compared himself to Michael Angelo, and spoke against Raphael, calling him *hard*, *dry*, &c. Both these were fatal symptoms for the ultimate success of the work: the picture was in fact afterwards severely censured, so as to cause him much uneasiness; and he passed a great part of his life in quarrelling with the world for admiring his landscapes, which were truly excellent, and for not admiring his historical pieces, which were full of defects. Salvator wanted self-knowledge, and that respect for others, which is both a cause and consequence of it. Like many more, he mistook the violent and irritable workings of self-will (in a wrong direction) for the impulse of genius, and his insensibility to the vast superiority of others for a proof of his equality with them.

In the first place, nothing augurs worse for any one's pretensions to the highest rank of excellence than his making free with those of others. He who boldly and unreservedly places himself on a level with the *mighty dead*, shows a want of sentiment—the only thing that can ensure immortality to his own works. When we forestal the judgment of posterity, it is because we are not confident of it. A mind that brings all others into a line with its own naked or assumed merits, that sees all objects in the foreground as it were, that does not regard the lofty monuments of genius through the atmosphere of fame, is coarse, crude, and repulsive as a picture without aerial perspective. Time, like distance, spreads a haze and a glory round all things. Not to perceive this, is to want a sense, is to be without imagination. Yet there are those who strut in their own self-opinion, and deck themselves out in the plumes of fancied self-importance as if they were crowned with laurel by Apollo's own hand. There was nothing in common between Salvator and Michael Angelo: if there had, the consciousness of the power with which he had to

with admiration of its capacity and solid contents, at the last with wonder at what it *can* contain (any more than a drum-head), at the man of 'fancy' or of '*the* fancy' with disgust at the grossness and brutality which he did not affect to conceal. These, however, are slight physiognomical observations taken at random: but I should be happy to have my 'squandering glances' in any degree confirmed by the profounder science and more accurate investigations of northern genius!

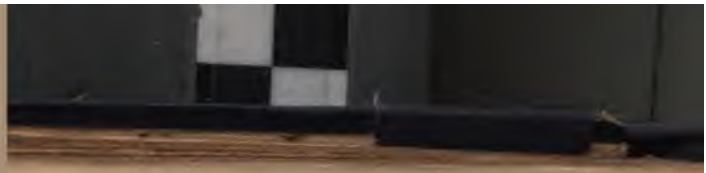
contend would have over-awed and struck him dumb; so that the very familiarity of his approaches proved (as much as any thing else) the immense distance placed between them. Painters alone seem to have a trick of putting themselves on an equal footing with the greatest of their predecessors, of advancing, on the sole strength of their vanity and presumption, to the highest seats in the Temple of Fame, of talking of themselves and Raphael and Michael Angelo in the same breath! What should we think of a poet who should publish to the world, or give a broad hint in private, that he conceived himself fully on a par with Homer or Milton or Shakespear? It would be too much for a friend to say so of him. But artists suffer their friends to puff them in the true 'King Cambyses' vein' without blushing. Is it that they are often men without a liberal education, who have no notion of any thing that does not come under their immediate observation, and who accordingly prefer the living to the dead, and themselves to all the rest of the world? Or that there is something in the nature of the profession itself, fixing the view on a particular point of time, and not linking the present either with the past or future?

Again, Salvator's disregard for Raphael, instead of inspiring him with any thing like 'vain and self-conceit,' ought to have taught him the greatest diffidence in himself. Instead of anticipating a triumph over Raphael from this circumstance, he might have foreseen in it the sure source of his mortification and defeat. The public looked to find in *his* pictures what he did not see in Raphael, and were necessarily disappointed. He could hardly be expected to produce that which when produced and set before him, he did not feel or understand. The genius for a particular thing does not imply taste in general or for other things, but it assuredly presupposes a taste or feeling for that particular thing. Salvator was so much offended with the *dryness*, *hardness*, &c. of Raphael, only because he was not struck, that is, did not sympathise with the divine mind within. If he had, he would have bowed as at a shrine, in spite of the homeliness or finicalness of the covering. Let no man build himself a spurious self-esteem on his contempt or indifference for acknowledged excellence. He will in the end pay dear for a momentary delusion: for the world will sooner or later discover those deficiences in him, which render him insensible to all merits but his own.

Of all modes of acquiring distinction and, as it were, 'getting the start of the majestic world,' the most absurd as well as disgusting is that of setting aside the claims of others in the lump, and holding out our own particular excellence or pursuit as the only one worth attending to. We thus set ourselves up as the standard of perfection,

and treat every thing else that diverges from that standard as beneath our notice. At this rate, a contempt for any thing and a superiority to it are synonymous. It is a cheap and a short way of showing that we possess all excellence within ourselves, to deny the use or merit of all those qualifications that do not belong to us. According to such a mode of computation, it would appear that our value is to be estimated not by the number of acquirements that we *do* possess, but of those in which we are deficient and to which we are insensible: —so that we can at any time supply the place of wisdom and skill by a due proportion of ignorance, affectation, and conceit. If so, the dullest fellow, with impudence enough to despise what he does not understand, will always be the brightest genius and the greatest man. If stupidity is to be a substitute for taste, knowledge, and genius, any one may dogmatise and play the critic on this ground. We may easily make a monopoly of talent, if the torpedo-touch of our callous and wilful indifference is to neutralise all other pretensions. We have only to deny the advantages of others to make them our own: illiberality will carve out the way to pre-eminence much better than toil or study or quickness of parts; and by narrowing our views and divesting ourselves at last of common feeling and humanity, we may arrogate every valuable accomplishment to ourselves, and exalt ourselves vastly above our fellow-mortals! That is, in other words, we have only to shut our eyes, in order to blot the sun out of heaven, and to annihilate whatever gives light or heat to the world, if it does not emanate from one single source, by spreading the cloud of our own envy, spleen, malice, want of comprehension, and prejudice over it. Yet how many are there who act upon this theory in good earnest, grow more bigoted to it every day, and not only become the dupes of it themselves, but by dint of gravity, by bullying and brow-beating, succeed in making converts of others!

A man is a political economist. Good: but this is no reason he should think there is nothing else in the world, or that every thing else is good for nothing. Let us suppose that this is the most important subject, and that being his favourite study, he is the best judge of that point, still it is not the only one—why then treat every other question or pursuit with disdain as insignificant and mean, or endeavour to put others who have devoted their whole time to it out of conceit with that on which they depend for their amusement or (perhaps) subsistence? I see neither the wit, wisdom, nor good-nature of this mode of proceeding. Let him fill his library with books on this one subject, yet other persons are not bound to follow the example, and exclude every other topic from theirs—let him write, let him talk, let him think on nothing else, but let him not



impose the same pedantic humour as a duty or a mark of taste on others—let him ride the high horse, and drag his heavy load of mechanical knowledge along the iron rail-way of the master-science, but let him not move out of it to taunt or jostle those who are jogging quietly along upon their several *hobbies*, who 'owe him no allegiance,' and care not one jot for his opinion. Yet we could forgive such a person, if he made it his boast that he had read Don Quixote twice through in the original Spanish, and preferred Lycidas to all Milton's smaller poems! What would Mr. —— say to any one who should profess a contempt for political economy? He would answer very bluntly and very properly, 'Then you know nothing about it.' It is a pity that so sensible a man and close a reasoner should think of putting down other lighter and more elegant pursuits by professing a contempt or indifference for them, which springs from precisely the same source, and is of just the same value. But so it is that there seems to be a tacit presumption of folly in whatever gives pleasure; while an air of gravity and wisdom hovers round the painful and pedantic.

A man comes into a room, and on his first entering, declares without preface or ceremony his contempt for poetry. Are we therefore to conclude him a greater genius than Homer? No: but by this cavalier opinion he assumes a certain natural ascendancy over those who admire poetry. To *look down* upon any thing seemingly implies a greater elevation and enlargement of view than to *look up* to it. The present Lord Chancellor took upon him to declare in open court that he would not go across the street to hear Madame Catalani sing. What did this prove? His want of an ear for music, not his capacity for any thing higher: So far as it went, it only showed him to be inferior to those thousands of persons who go with eager expectation to hear her, and come away with astonishment and rapture. A man might as well tell you he is deaf, and expect you to look at him with more respect. The want of any external sense or organ is an acknowledged defect and infirmity: the want of an internal sense or faculty is equally so, though our self-love contrives to give a different turn to it. We mortify others by *throwing cold water* on that in which they have an advantage over us, or stagger their opinion of an excellence which is not of self-evident or absolute utility, and lessen its supposed value, by limiting the universality of a taste for it. Lord Eldon's protest on this occasion was the more extraordinary, as he is not only a good-natured but a successful man. These little spiteful allusions are most apt to proceed from disappointed vanity, and an apprehension that justice is not done to ourselves. By being at the top of a profession, we have leisure to look beyond it.

ON EGOTISM

Those who really excel and are allowed to excel in any thing have no excuse for trying to gain a reputation by undermining the pretensions of others; they stand on their own ground; and do not need the aid of invidious comparisons. Besides, the consciousness of excellence produces a fondness for, a faith in it. I should half suspect that any one could not be a great lawyer, who denied that Madame Catalani was a great singer. The Chancellor must dislike her decisive tone, the rapidity of her movements! The late Chancellor (Erskine) was a man of (at least) a different stamp. In the exuberance and buoyancy of his animal spirits, he scattered the graces and ornaments of life over the dust and cobwebs of the law. What is there that is now left of him—what is there to redeem his foibles, or to recal the flush of early enthusiasm in his favour, or kindle one spark of sympathy in the breast, but his romantic admiration of Mrs. Siddons? There are those who, if you praise *Walton's Complete Angler*, sneer at it as a childish or old-womanish performance: some laugh at the amusement of fishing as silly, others carp at it as cruel; and Dr. Johnson said that 'a fishing-rod was a stick with a hook at one end, and a fool at the other.' I would rather take the word of one who had stood for days, up to his knees in water, and in the coldest weather, intent on this employ, who returned to it again with unabated relish, and who spent his whole life in the same manner without being weary of it at last. There is something in this more than Dr. Johnson's definition accounts for. A *fool* takes no interest in any thing; or if he does, it is better to be a fool, than a wise man, whose only pleasure is to disparage the pursuits and occupations of others, and out of ignorance or prejudice to condemn them, merely because they are not *his*.

Whatever interests, is interesting. I know of no way of estimating the real value of objects in all their bearings and consequences, but I can tell at once their intellectual value by the degree of passion or sentiment the very idea and mention of them excites in the mind. To judge of things by reason or the calculations of positive utility is a slow, cold, uncertain, and barren process—their power of appealing to and affecting the imagination as subjects of thought and feeling is best measured by the habitual impression they leave upon the mind, and it is with this only we have to do in expressing our delight or admiration of them, or in setting a just mental value upon them. They ought to excite all the emotion which they do excite; for this is the instinctive and unerring result of the constant experience we have had of their power of affecting us, and of the associations that cling unconsciously to them. Fancy, feeling may be very inadequate tests of truth; but truth itself operates chiefly on the

human mind through them. It is in vain to tell me that what excites the heart-felt sigh of youth, the tears of delight in age, and fills up the busy interval between with pleasing and lofty thoughts, is frivolous, or a waste of time, or of no use. You only by that give me a mean opinion of your ideas of utility. The labour of years, the triumph of aspiring genius and consummate skill, is not to be put down by a cynical frown, by a supercilious smile, by an ignorant sarcasm. Things barely of use are subjects of professional skill and scientific inquiry: they must also be beautiful and pleasing to attract common attention, and be naturally and universally interesting. A pair of shoes is good to wear: a pair of sandals is a more picturesque object; and a statue or a poem are certainly good to think and talk about, which are part of the business of life. To think and speak of them with contempt is therefore a wilful and studied solecism. Pictures are good things to go and see. This is what people do; they do not expect to eat or make a dinner of them; but we sometimes want to fill up the time before dinner. The progress of civilisation and refinement is from instrumental to final causes; from supplying the wants of the body to providing luxuries for the mind. To stop at the *mechanical*, and refuse to proceed to the *fine arts*, or churlishly to reject all ornamental studies and elegant accomplishments as mean and trivial, because they only afford employment to the imagination, create food for thought, furnish the mind, sustain the soul in health and enjoyment, is a rude and barbarous theory—

'Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.'

Before we absolutely condemn any thing, we ought to be able to show something better, not merely in itself, but in the same class. To know the best in each class infers a higher degree of taste; to reject the class is only a negation of taste; for different classes do not interfere with one another, nor can any one's *ipse dixit* be taken on so wide a question as abstract excellence. Nothing is truly and altogether despicable that excites angry contempt or warm opposition, since this always implies that some one else is of a different opinion, and takes an equal interest in it.

When I speak of what is interesting, however, I mean not only to a particular profession, but in general to others. Indeed, it is the very popularity and obvious interest attached to certain studies and pursuits, that excites the envy and hostile regard of graver and more recondite professions. Man is perhaps not naturally an egotist, or at least he is satisfied with his own particular line of excellence and the value that he supposes inseparable from it, till he comes into the world and finds it of so little account in the eyes of the vulgar; and

he then turns round and vents his chagrin and disappointment on those more attractive, but (as he conceives) superficial studies, which cost less labour and patience to understand them, and are of so much less use to society. The injustice done to ourselves makes us unjust to others. The man of science and the hard student (from this cause, as well as from a certain unbending hardness of mind) come at last to regard whatever is generally pleasing and striking as worthless and light, and to proportion their contempt to the admiration of others; while the artist, the poet, and the votary of pleasure and popularity treat the more solid and useful branches of human knowledge as disagreeable and dull. This is often carried to too great a length. It is enough that 'wisdom is justified of her children:' the philosopher ought to smile, instead of being angry at the folly of mankind (if such it is), and those who find both pleasure and profit in adorning and polishing the airy 'capitals' of science and of art, ought not to grudge those who toil underground at the foundation, the praise that is due to their patience and self-denial. There is a variety of tastes and capacities that requires all the variety of men's talents to administer to it. The less excellent must be provided for as well as the more excellent. Those who are only capable of amusement ought to be amused. If all men were forced to be great philosophers and lasting benefactors of their species, how few of us could ever do any thing at all! But nature acts more impartially, though not improvidently. Wherever she bestows a *turn* for any thing on the individual, she implants a corresponding taste for it in others. We have only to 'throw our bread upon the waters, and after many days we shall find it again.' Let us do our best, and we need not be ashamed of the smallness of our talent, or afraid of the calumnies and contempt of envious maligners. When Goldsmith was talking one day to Sir Joshua of writing a fable in which little fishes were to be introduced, Dr. Johnson rolled about uneasily in his seat and began to laugh, on which Goldsmith said rather angrily—'Why do you laugh? If you were to write a fable for little fishes, you would make them speak like great whales!' The reproof was just. Johnson was in truth conscious of Goldsmith's superior inventiveness, and of the lighter graces of his pen, but he wished to reduce every thing to his own pompous and oracular style. There are not only *books for children*, but books for all ages and for both sexes. After we grow up to years of discretion, we do not all become equally wise at once. Our own tastes change: the tastes of other individuals are still more different. It was said the other day, that 'Thomson's Seasons would be read while there was a boarding-school girl in the world.' If a thousand volumes were written against *Hervey's Meditations*, the



THE PLAIN SPEAKER

The collision of truth or genius naturally gives a shock to the pride of exalted rank: the great and mighty usually seek out the dregs of mankind, buffoons and flatterers, for their pampered self-love to repose on. Pride soon tires of every thing but its shadow, servility: but how poor a triumph is that which exists only by excluding all rivalry, however remote. He who invites competition (the only test of merit), who challenges fair comparisons, and weighs different claims, is alone possessed of manly ambition; but will not long continue vain or proud. Pride is 'a cell of ignorance; travelling a-bed.' If we look at all out of ourselves, we must see how far short we are of what we would be thought. The man of genius is poor;[1] the rich man is not a lord: the lord wants to be a king: the king is uneasy to be a tyrant or a God. Yet he alone, who could claim this last character upon earth, gave his life a ransom for others! The dwarf in the romance, who saw the shadows of the fairest and the mightiest among the sons of men pass before him, that he might assume the shape he liked best, had only his choice of wealth, or beauty, or valour, or power. But could he have clutched them all, and melted them into one essence of pride, the triumph would not have been lasting. Could vanity take all pomp and power to itself, could it, like the rainbow, span the earth, and seem to prop the heavens, after all it would be but the wonder of the ignorant, the pageant of a moment. The fool who dreams that he is great should first forget that he is a man, and before he thinks of being proud, should pray to be mad!—The only great man in modern times, that is, the only man who rose in deeds and fame to the level of antiquity, who might turn his gaze upon himself, and wonder at his height, for on him all eyes were fixed as his majestic stature towered above thrones and monuments of renown, died the other day in exile, and in lingering agony; and we still see fellows strutting about the streets, and fancying they are something!

Personal vanity is incompatible with the great and the *ideal*. He

[1] I do not speak of poverty as an absolute evil; though when accompanied with luxurious habits and vanity, it is a great one. Even hardships and privations have their use, and give strength and endurance. Labour renders ease delightful—hunger is the best sauce. The peasant, who at noon rests from his weary task under a hawthorn hedge, and eats his slice of coarse bread and cheese or rusty bacon, enjoys more real luxury than the prince with pampered, listless appetite under a canopy of state. Why then does the mind of man pity the former, and envy the latter? It is because the imagination changes places with others in situation only, not in feeling; and in fancying ourselves the peasant, we revolt at his homely fare, from not being possessed of his gross taste or keen appetite, while in thinking of the prince, we suppose ourselves to sit down to his delicate viands and sumptuous board, with a relish unabated by long habit and vicious excess. I am not sure whether Mandeville has not given the same answer to this hackneyed question.

who has not seen, or thought, or read of something finer than himself, has seen, or read, or thought little; and he who has, will not be always looking in the glass of his own vanity. Hence poets, artists, and men of genius in general, are seldom coxcombs, but often slovens; for they find something out of themselves better worth studying than their own persons. They have an imaginary standard in their minds, with which ordinary features (even their own) will not bear a comparison, and they turn their thoughts another way. If a man had a face like one of Raphael's or Titian's heads, he might be proud of it, but not else; and, even then, he would be stared at as a *non-descript* by 'the universal English nation.' Few persons who have seen the Antinous or the Theseus will be much charmed with their own beauty or symmetry; nor will those who understand the *costume* of the antique, or Vandyke's dresses, spend much time in decking themselves out in all the deformity of the prevailing fashion. A coxcomb is his own lay-figure, for want of any better models to employ his time and imagination upon.

There is an inverted sort of pride, the reverse of that egotism that has been above described, and which, because it cannot be every thing, is dissatisfied with every thing. A person who is liable to this infirmity, 'thinks nothing done, while any thing remains to be done.' The sanguine egotist prides himself on what he can do or possesses, the morbid egotist despises himself for what he wants, and is ever going out of his way to attempt hopeless and impossible tasks. The effect in either case is not at all owing to reason, but to temperament. The one is as easily depressed by what mortifies his latent ambition, as the other is elated by what flatters his immediate vanity. There are persons whom no success, no advantages, no applause can satisfy, for they dwell only on failure and defeat. They constantly 'forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the things that are before.' The greatest and most decided acquisitions would not indemnify them for the smallest deficiency. They go beyond the old motto—*Aut Cæsar, aut nihil*—they not only want to be at the head of whatever they undertake, but if they succeed in that, they immediately want to be at the head of something else, no matter how gross or trivial. The charm that rivets their affections is not the importance or reputation annexed to the new pursuit, but its novelty or difficulty. That must be a wonderful accomplishment indeed, which baffles their skill—nothing is with them of any value but as it gives scope to their restless activity of mind, their craving after an uneasy and importunate state of excitement. To them the pursuit is every thing, the possession nothing. I have known persons of this stamp, who, with every reason to be satisfied with their success in

life, and with the opinion entertained of them by others, despised themselves because they could not do something which they were not bound to do, and which, if they could have done it, would not have added one jot to their respectability, either in their own eyes or those of any one else, the very insignificance of the attainment irritating their impatience, for it is the humour of such dispositions to argue, 'If they cannot succeed in what is trifling and contemptible, how should they succeed in any thing else?' If they could make the circuit of the arts and sciences, and master them all, they would take to some mechanical exercise, and if they failed, be as discontented as ever. All that they can do vanishes out of sight the moment it is within their grasp, and 'nothing is but what is not.' A poet of this description is ambitious of the thews and muscles of a prize fighter, and thinks himself nothing without them. A prose-writer would be a fine tennis-player, and is thrown into despair because he is not one, without considering that it requires a whole life devoted to the game to excel in it; and that, even if he could dispense with this apprenticeship, he would still be just as much bound to excel in rope-dancing, or horsemanship, or playing at cup and ball like the Indian jugglers, all which is impossible. This feeling is a strange mixture of modesty and pride. We think nothing of what we are, because we cannot be every thing with a wish. Goldsmith was even jealous of beauty in the other sex, and the same character is attributed to Wharton by Pope:

> 'Though listening senates hung on all he spoke,
> The club must hail him master of the joke.'

Players are for going into the church—officers in the army turn players. For myself, do what I might, I should think myself a poor creature unless I could beat a boy of ten years old at chuck-farthing, or an elderly gentlewoman at piquet!

The extreme of fastidious discontent and repining is as bad as that of over-weening presumption. We ought to be satisfied if we have succeeded in any one thing, or with having done our best. Any thing more is for health and amusement, and should be resorted to as a source of pleasure, not of fretful impatience, and endless pity, self-imposed mortification. Perhaps the jealous, uneasy temperament is most favourable to continued exertion and improvement, if it does not lead us to fritter away attention on too many pursuits. By looking out of ourselves, we gain knowledge: by being little satisfied with what we have done, we are less apt to sink into indolence and security. To conclude with a piece of egotism: I never begin one of these *Essays* with a consciousness of having written a line before; and having got to the end of the volume, hope never to look into it again.

ESSAY XVI

HOT AND COLD

'——Hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery.'— MILTON.

'THE Protestants are much cleaner than the Catholics,' said a shopkeeper of Vevey to me. 'They are so,' I replied, 'but why should they?' A prejudice appeared to him a matter-of-fact, and he did not think it necessary to assign reasons for a matter-of-fact. That is not my way. He had not bottomed his proposition on proofs, nor rightly defined it.

Nearly the same remark, as to the extreme cleanliness of the people in this part of the country, had occurred to me as soon as I got to Brigg, where however the inhabitants are Catholics. So the original statement requires some qualification as to the mode of enunciation. I had no sooner arrived in this village, which is situated just under the Simplon, and where you are surrounded with *glaciers* and *goitres*, than the genius of the place struck me on looking out at the pump under my window the next morning, where the 'neat-handed Phyllises' were washing their greens in the water, that not a caterpillar could crawl on them, and scouring their pails and tubs that not a stain should be left in them. The raw, clammy feeling of the air was in unison with the scene. I had not seen such a thing in Italy. They have there no delight in splashing and dabbling in fresh streams and fountains—they have a dread of ablutions and abstersions, almost amounting to *hydrophobia*. Heat has an antipathy in nature to cold. The sanguine Italian is chilled and shudders at the touch of cold water, while the Helvetian boor, whose humours creep through his veins like the dank mists along the sides of his frozen mountains, is 'native and endued unto that element.' Here every thing is purified and filtered: there it is baked and burnt up, and sticks together in a most amicable union of filth and laziness. There is a little mystery and a little contradiction in the case—let us try if we cannot get rid of both by means of caution and daring together. It is not that the difference of latitude between one side of the Alps and the other can signify much: but the phlegmatic blood of their German ancestors is poured down the valleys of the Swiss like water, and *iced* in its progress; whereas that of the Italians, besides its vigorous origin, is enriched and ripened by basking in more genial plains. A single Milanese market-girl (to go no farther south)

appeared to me to have more blood in her body, more fire in her eye (as if the sun had made a burning *lens* of it), more spirit and probably more mischief about her than all the nice, *tidy*, good-looking, hard-working girls I have seen in Switzerland. To turn this physiognomical observation to a metaphysical account, I should say then that Northern people are clean and Southern people dirty as a general rule, because where the principle of life is more cold, weak, and impoverished, there is a greater shyness and aversion to come in contact with external matter (with which it does not so easily amalgamate), a greater fastidiousness and delicacy in choosing its sensations, a greater desire to know surrounding objects and to keep them clear of each other, than where this principle being more warm and active, it may be supposed to absorb outward impressions in itself, to melt them into its own essence, to impart its own vital impulses to them, and in fine, instead of shrinking from every thing, to be shocked at nothing. The Southern temperament is (so to speak) more sociable with matter, more gross, impure, indifferent, from relying on its own strength; while that opposed to it, from being less able to react on external applications, is obliged to be more cautious and particular as to the kind of excitement to which it renders itself liable. Hence the timidity, reserve, and occasional hypocrisy of Northern manners; the boldness, freedom, levity, and frequent licentiousness of Southern ones. It would be too much to say, that if there is any thing of which a genuine Italian has a horror, it is of cleanliness; or that if there is any thing which seems ridiculous to a thorough-bred Italian woman, it is modesty: but certainly the degree to which nicety is carried by some people is a *bore* to an Italian imagination, as the excess of delicacy which is pretended or practised by some women is quite incomprehensible to the females of the South. It is wrong, however, to make the greater confidence or forwardness of manners an absolute test of morals: the love of virtue is a different thing from the fear or even hatred of vice. The squeamishness and prudery in the one case have a more plausible appearance; but it does not follow that there may not be more native goodness and even habitual refinement in the other, though accompanied with stronger nerves, and a less morbid imagination. But to return to the first question.[1]—I can readily understand how a Swiss peasant should stand a whole morning at a pump, washing cabbages, cauliflowers, sallads, and getting rid half a dozen times over of the sand, dirt, and insects they contain, because I myself should not only be *gravelled* by

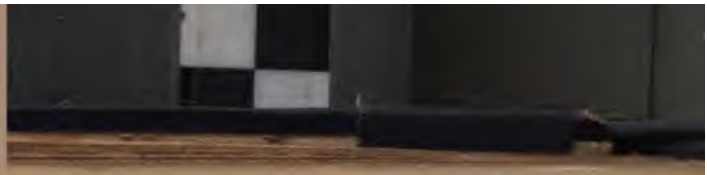
[1] Women abroad (generally speaking) are more like men in the tone of their conversation and habits of thinking, so that from the same premises you cannot draw the same conclusions as in England.

meeting with the one at table, but should be in horrors at the other. A Frenchman or an Italian would be thrown into convulsions of laughter at this superfluous delicacy, and would think his repast enriched or none the worse for such additions. The reluctance to prey on life, or on what once had it, seems to arise from a sense of incongruity, from the repugnance between life and death—from the cold, clammy feeling which belongs to the one, and which is enhanced by the contrast to its former warm, lively state, and by the circumstance of its being taken into the mouth, and devoured as food. Hence the desire to get rid of the idea of the living animal even in ordinary cases by all the disguises of cookery, of boiled and roast, and by the artifice of changing the name of the animal into something different when it becomes food.[1] Hence sportsmen are not devourers of game, and hence the aversion to kill the animals we eat.[2] There is a contradiction between the animate and the inanimate, which is felt as matter of peculiar annoyance by the more cold and congealed temperament which cannot so well pass from one to the other; but this objection is easily swallowed by the inhabitant of gayer and more luxurious regions, who is so full of life himself that he can at once impart it to all that comes in his way, or never troubles himself about the difference. So the Neapolitan bandit takes the life of his victim with little remorse, because he has enough and to spare in himself: his pulse still beats warm and vigorous, while the blood of a more humane native of the frozen North would run cold with horror at the sight of the stiffened corse, and this makes him pause before he stops in another the gushing source, of which he has such feeble supplies in himself. The wild Arab of the Desert can hardly entertain the idea of death, neither dreading it for himself nor regretting it for others. The Italians, Spaniards, and people of the South swarm alive without being sick or sorry at the circumstance: they hunt the accustomed prey in each other's tangled locks openly in the streets and on the highways, without manifesting shame or

[1] This circumstance is noticed in Ivanhoe, though a different turn is given to it by the philosopher of Rotherwood.

'Nay, I can tell you more,' said Wamba in the same tone, 'there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet, while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou; but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf too becomes Monsieur de Veau in like manner: he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment.'—Vol. I, Chap. I.

[2] Hence the peculiar horror of cannibalism from the stronger sympathy with our own sensations, and the greater violence that is done to it by the sacrilegious use of what once possessed human life and feeling.



repugnance: combs are an invention of our Northern climes. Now I can comprehend this, when I look at the dirty, dingy, greasy, sunburnt complexion of an Italian peasant or beggar, whose body seems alive all over with a sort of tingling, oily sensation, so that from any given particle of his shining skin to the beast 'whose name signifies love' the transition is but small. This populousness is not unaccountable where all teems with life, where all is glowing and in motion, and every pore thrills with an exuberance of feeling. Not so in the dearth of life and spirit, in the drossy, dry, material texture, the clear complexions and fair hair of the Saxon races, where the puncture of an insect's sting is a solution of their personal identity, and the idea of life attached to and courting an intimacy with them in spite of themselves, naturally produces all the revulsions of the most violent antipathy and nearly drives them out of their wits. How well the smooth ivory comb and auburn hair agree—while the Greek *dandy*, on entering a room, applies his hand to brush a cloud of busy stragglers from his hair like powder, and gives himself no more concern about them than about the motes dancing in the sunbeams! The dirt of the Italians is as it were baked into them, and so ingrained as to become a part of themselves, and occasion no discontinuity of their being.

I can forgive the dirt and sweat of a gipsey under a hedge, when I consider that the earth is his mother, the sun is his father. He hunts vermin for food: he is himself hunted like vermin for prey. His existence is not one of choice, but of necessity. The hungry Arab devours the raw shoulder of a horse. This again I can conceive. His feverish blood seethes it, and the virulence of his own breath carries off the disagreeableness of the smell. I do not see that the horse should be reckoned among unclean animals, according to any notions I have of the matter. The dividing of the hoof or the contrary, I should think, has not any thing to do with the question. I can understand the distinction between beasts of prey and the herbivorous and domestic animals, but the horse is tame. The natural distinction between clean and unclean animals (which has been sometimes made into a religious one) I take to depend on two circumstances, viz. the claws and bristly hide, which generally, though not always, go together. One would not wish to be torn in pieces instead of making a comfortable meal, 'to be supped upon' where we thought of supping. With respect to the wolf, the tiger, and other animals of the same species, it seems a question which of us should devour the other: this baulks our appetite by distracting our attention, and we have so little relish for being eaten ourselves, or for the fangs and teeth of these shocking animals, that it gives us a

distaste for their whole bodies. The horror we conceive at preying upon them arises in part from the fear we had of being preyed upon by them. No such apprehension crosses the mind with respect to the deer, the sheep, the hare—'here all is conscience and tender heart.' These gentle creatures (whom we compliment as useful) offer no resistance to the knife, and there is therefore nothing shocking or repulsive in the idea of devoting them to it. There is no confusion of ideas, but a beautiful simplicity and uniformity in our relation to each other, we as the slayers, they as the slain. A perfect understanding subsists on the subject. The hair of animals of prey is also strong and bristly, and forms an obstacle to our Epicurean designs. The calf or fawn is sleek and smooth: the bristles on a dog's or a cat's back are like 'the quills upon the fretful porcupine,' a very impracticable repast to the imagination, that stick in the throat and turn the stomach. Who has not read and been edified by the account of the supper in Gil Blas? Besides, there is also in all probability the practical consideration urged by Voltaire's traveller, who being asked 'which he preferred—black mutton or white?' replied, 'Either, provided it was tender.' The greater rankness in the flesh is however accompanied by a corresponding irritability of surface, a tenaciousness, a pruriency, a soreness to attack, and not that fine, round, pampered passiveness to impressions which cuts up into handsome joints and entire pieces without any fidgetty process, and with an obvious view to solid, wholesome nourishment. Swine's flesh, the abomination of the Jewish law, certainly comes under the objection here stated; and the bear with its shaggy fur is only smuggled into the Christian larder as half-brother to the wild boar, and because from its lazy, lumpish character and appearance, it seems matter of indifference whether it eats or is eaten. The horse, with sleek round haunches, is fair game, except from custom; and I think I could survive having swallowed part of an ass's foal without being utterly loathsome to myself.[1] Mites in a rotten cheese are endurable, from being so small and dry that they are scarce distinguishable from the atoms of the cheese itself, 'so drossy and divisible are they:' but the Lord deliver me from their more thriving next-door neighbours! Animals that are made use of as food should either be so small as to be imperceptible, or else we should dig into the quarry of life, hew away the masses, and not leave the form standing to reproach us with our gluttony and cruelty. I hate to see a rabbit trussed, or a hare brought to table in the form which it occupied while living: they seem to me apparitions of the burrowers in the earth or the rovers in

[1] Thomas Cooper of Manchester, the able logician and political partisan, tried the experiment some years ago, when he invited a number of gentlemen and



the wood, sent to scare away appetite. One reason why toads and serpents are disgusting, is from the way in which they run against or suddenly cling to the skin: the encountering them causes a solution of continuity, and we shudder to feel a life which is not ours in contact with us. It is this disjointed or imperfect sympathy which in the recoil produces the greatest antipathy. Sterne asks why a sword, which takes away life, may be named without offence, though other things, which contribute to perpetuate it, cannot? Because the idea in the one case is merely painful, and there is no mixture of the agreeable to lead the imagination on to a point from which it must make a precipitate retreat. The morally indecent arises from the doubtful conflict between temptation and duty: the physically revolting is the product of alternate attraction and repulsion, of partial adhesion, or of something that is foreign to us sticking closer to our persons than we could wish. The nastiest tastes and smells are not the most pungent and painful, but a compound of sweet and bitter, of the agreeable and disagreeable; where the sense, having been relaxed and rendered effeminate as it were by the first, is unable to contend with the last, faints and sinks under it, and has no way of relieving itself but by violently throwing off the load that oppresses it. Hence loathing and sickness. But these hardly ever arise without something contradictory or *impure* in the objects, or unless the mind, having been invited and prepared to be gratified at first, this expectation is turned to disappointment and disgust. Mere pains, mere pleasures do not have this effect, save from an excess of the first causing insensibility and then a faintness ensues, or of the last, causing what is called a surfeit. Sea-sickness has some analogy to this. It comes on with that unsettled motion of the ship, which takes away the ordinary footing or firm hold we have of things, and by relaxing our perceptions, unbraces the whole nervous system. The giddiness and swimming of the head on looking down a precipice, when we are ready with every breath of imagination to topple down into the abyss, has its source in the same uncertain and rapid whirl of the fancy through possible extremes. Thus we find that for cases of

officers quartered in the town to dine with him on an ass's foal instead of a calf's-head, on the anniversary of the 30th of January. The circumstance got wind, and gave great offence. Mr. Cooper had to attend a country-meeting soon after at Boulton-le-Moors, and one of the country magistrates coming to the inn for the same purpose, and when he asked 'If any one was in the room!' receiving for answer—'No one but Mr. Cooper of Manchester'—ordered out his horse and immediately rode home again. Some verses made on the occasion by Mr. Scarlett and Mr. Shepherd of Gateacre explained the story thus—

'The reason how this came to pass is
The Justice had heard that Cooper ate asses!'

fainting, sea-sickness, &c. a glass of brandy is recommended as 'the sovereign'st thing on earth,' because by grappling with the coats of the stomach and bringing our sensations to a *focus*, it does away that nauseous fluctuation and suspense of feeling which is the root of the mischief. I do not know whether I make myself intelligible, for the utmost I can pretend is to suggest some very subtle and remote analogies: but if I have at all succeeded in opening up the train of argument I intend, it will at least be possible to conceive how the sanguine Italian is less nice in his intercourse with material objects, less startled at incongruities, less liable to take offence, than the more literal and conscientious German, because the more headstrong current of his own sensations fills up the gaps and 'makes the odds all even.' He does not care to have his cabbages and sallads washed ten times over, or his beds cleared of vermin: he can lend or borrow satisfaction from all objects indifferently. The air over his head is full of life, of the hum of insects; the grass under his feet rings and is loud with the cry of the grasshopper; innumerable green lizards dart from the rocks and sport before him: what signifies it if any living creature approaches nearer his own person, where all is one vital glow? The Indian even twines the forked serpent round his hand unharmed, copper-coloured like it, his veins as heated; and the Brahmin cherishes life and disregards his own person as an act of his religion—the religion of fire and of the sun! Yet how shall we reconcile to this theory the constant ablutions (five times a day) of the Eastern nations, and the squalid customs of some Northern people, the dirtiness of the Russians and of the Scotch? Superstition may perhaps account for the one, and poverty and barbarism for the other.[1]

Laziness has a great deal to do in the question, and this again is owing to a state of feeling sufficient to itself, and rich in enjoyment without the help of action. Clothilde (the finest and darkest of the Gensano girls) fixes herself at her door about noon (when her day's work is done): her smile reflects back the brightness of the sun, she darts upon a little girl with a child in her arms, nearly overturns both, devours it with kisses, and then resumes her position at the door, with her hands behind her back and her shoes down at heel. This slatternliness and negligence is the more remarkable in so fine

[1] What a plague Moses had with his Jews to make them 'reform and live cleanly!' To this day (according to a learned traveller) the Jews, wherever scattered, have an aversion to agriculture and almost to its products; and a Jewish girl will refuse to accept a flower—if you offer her a piece of money, of jewellery or embroidery, she knows well enough what to make of the proffered courtesy. See *Hacquet's Travels in Carpathia*, &c.

a girl, and one whose ordinary costume is a gorgeous picture, but it is a part of the character; her dress would never have been so rich, if she could take more pains about it—they have no nervous or fidgetty feeling whether a thing is coming off or not: all their sensations, as it were, sit loose upon them. Their clothes are no part of themselves,—they even fling their limbs about as if they scarcely belonged to them; the heat in summer requires the utmost freedom and airiness (which becomes a habit), and they have nothing tight-bound or strait-laced about their minds or bodies. The same girl in winter (for 'dull, cold winter *does* inhabit here' also) would have a *scaldaletto* (an earthen pan with coals in it) dangling at her wrists for four months together, without any sense of incumbrance or distraction, or any other feeling but of the heat it communicated to her hands. She does not mind its chilling the rest of her body or disfiguring her hands, making her fingers look like 'long purples' —these children of nature 'take the good the Gods provide them,' and trouble themselves little about consequences or appearances. Their self-will is much stronger than their vanity—they have as little curiosity about others as concern for their good opinion. Two Italian peasants talking by the roadside will not so much as turn their heads to look at an English carriage that is passing. They have no interest except in what is personal, sensual. Hence they have as little tenaciousness on the score of property as in the acquisition of ideas. They want neither. Their good spirits are food, clothing, and books to them. They are fond of comfort too, but their notion of it differs from ours—ours consists in accumulating the means of enjoyment, theirs in being free to enjoy, in the dear *far niente*. What need have they to encumber themselves with furniture or wealth or business, when all they require (for the most part) is air, a bunch of grapes, bread, and stone-walls? The Italians, generally speaking, have nothing, do nothing, want nothing,—to the surprise of foreigners, who ask how they live? The men are too lazy to be thieves, the women to be something else. The dependence of the Swiss and English on their comforts, that is, on all 'appliances and means to boot,' as helps to enjoyment or hindrances to annoyance, makes them not only eager to procure different objects of accommodation and luxury, but makes them take such pains in their preservation and embellishment, and *pet* them so when acquired. 'A man,' says Yorick, 'finds an apple, spits upon it, and calls it his.' The more any one finds himself clinging to material objects for existence or gratification, the more he will take a personal interest in them, and the more will he clean, repair, polish, scrub, scour, and tug at them without end, as if it were his own soul that he was keeping clear

from spot or blemish. A Swiss dairy-maid scours the very heart out of a wooden pail; a scullion washes the taste as well as the worms out of a dish of brocoli. The wenches are in like manner neat and clean in their own persons, but insipid. The most coarse and ordinary furniture in Switzerland has more pains bestowed upon it to keep it in order, than the finest works of art in Italy. There the pictures are suffered to moulder on the walls; and the Claudes in the Doria Palace at Rome are black with age and dirt. We set more store by them in England, where we have scarce any other sunshine! At the common inns on this side the Simplon, the very sheets have a character for whiteness to lose: the rods and testers of the beds are like a peeled wand. On the opposite side you are thankful when you are not shown into an apartment resembling a three-stalled stable, with horse-cloths for coverlids to hide the dirt, and beds of horse-hair or withered leaves as harbourage for vermin. The more, the merrier; the dirtier, the warmer; live and let live, seem maxims inculcated by the climate. Wherever things are not kept carefully apart from foreign admixtures and contamination, the distinctions of property itself will not, I conceive, be held exceedingly sacred. This feeling is strong as the passions are weak. A people that are remarkable for cleanliness, will be so for industry, for honesty, for avarice, and *vice versâ*. The Italians cheat, steal, rob (when they think it worth their while to do so) with licensed impunity: the Swiss, who feel the value of property, and labour incessantly to acquire it, are afraid to lose it. At Brigg I first heard the cry of watchmen at night, which I had not heard for many months. I was reminded of the traveller who after wandering in remote countries saw a gallows near at hand, and knew by this circumstance that he approached the confines of civilization. The police in Italy is both secret and severe, but it is directed chiefly to political and not to civil matters. Patriot sighs are heaved unheard in the dungeons of St. Angelo: the Neapolitan bandit breathes the free air of his native mountains!

It may by this time be conjectured why Catholics are less cleanly than Protestants, because in fact they are less scrupulous, and swallow whatever is set before them in matters of faith as well as other things. Protestants, as such, are captious and scrutinising, try to pick holes and find fault,—have a dry, meagre, penurious imagination. Catholics are buoyed up over doubts and difficulties by a greater redundance of fancy, and make religion subservient to a sense of enjoyment. The one are for detecting and weeding out all corruptions and abuses in doctrine or worship: the others enrich theirs with the dust and cobwebs of antiquity, and think their ritual none the worse for the

tarnish of age. Those of the Catholic Communion are willing to take it for granted that every thing is right; the professors of the Reformed religion have a pleasure in believing that every thing is wrong, in order that they may have to set it right. In morals, again, Protestants are more precise than their Catholic brethren. The creed of the latter absolves them of half their duties, of all those that are a clog on their inclinations, atones for all slips, and patches up all deficiencies. But though this may make them less censorious and sour, I am not sure that it renders them less in earnest in the part they do perform. When more is left to freedom of choice, perhaps the service that is voluntary will be purer and more effectual. That which is not so may as well be done by proxy; or if it does not come from the heart, may be suffered to exhale merely from the lips. If less is owing in this case to a dread of vice and fear of shame, more will proceed from a love of virtue, free from the least sinister construction. It is asserted that Italian women are more gross; I can believe it, and that they are at the same time more refined than others. Their religion is in the same manner more sensual: but is it not to the full as visionary and imaginative as any? I have heard Italian women say things that others would not—it does not therefore follow that they would do them: partly because the knowledge of vice that makes it familiar renders it indifferent; and because the same masculine tone of thinking that enables them to confront vice, may raise them above it into a higher sphere of sentiment. If their senses are more inflammable, their passions (and their love of virtue and of religion among the rest) may glow with proportionable ardour. Indeed the truest virtue is that which is least susceptible of contamination from its opposite. I may admire a Raphael, and yet not swoon at sight of a daub. Why should there not be the same taste in morals as in pictures or poems? Granting that vice has more votaries here, at least it has fewer mercenary ones, and this is no trifling advantage. As to manners, the Catholics must be allowed to carry it over all the world. The better sort not only say nothing to give you pain; they say nothing of others that it would give them pain to hear repeated. Scandal and tittle-tattle are long banished from good society. After all, to be wise is to be humane. What would our English *blue-stockings* say to this? The fault and the excellence of Italian society is, that the shocking or disagreeable is not supposed to have an existence in the nature of things.[1]

[1] The dirt and comparative want of conveniences among Catholics is often attributed to the number of their Saints' days and festivals, which divert them from labour, and give them an idle and disorderly turn of mind.

ESSAY XVII

THE NEW SCHOOL OF REFORM

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A RATIONALIST AND A SENTIMENTALIST

R. WHAT is it you so particularly object to this school? Is there any thing so very obnoxious in the doctrine of Utility, which they profess? Or in the design to bring about the greatest possible good by the most efficacious and disinterested means?

S. Disinterested enough, indeed: since their plan seems to be to sacrifice every individual comfort for the good of the whole. Can they find out no better way of making human life run smooth and pleasant, than by drying up the brain and curdling the blood? I do not want society to resemble a *Living Skeleton*, whatever these 'Job's Comforters' may do. They are like the fox in the fable—they have no feeling themselves, and would persuade others to do without it. Take away the *dulce* of the poet, and I do not see what is to become of the *utile*. It is the common error of the human mind, of forgetting the end in the means.

R. I see you are at your *Sentimentalities* again. Pray, tell me, is it not their having applied this epithet to some of your favourite speculations, that has excited this sudden burst of spleen against them?

S. At least I cannot retort this phrase on those printed *circulars* which they throw down areas and fasten under knockers. But pass on for that. Answer me then, what is there agreeable or ornamental in human life that they do not explode with fanatic rage? What is there sordid and cynical that they do not eagerly catch at? What is there that delights others that does not disgust them. What that disgusts others with which they are not delighted? I cannot think that this is owing to philosophy, but to a sinister bias of mind; inasmuch as a marked deficiency of temper is a more obvious way of accounting for certain things than an entire superiority of understanding. The Ascetics of old thought they were doing God good service by tormenting themselves and denying others the most innocent amusements. Who doubts now that in this (armed as they were with texts and authorities and awful denunciations) they were really actuated by a morose and envious disposition, that had no capacity for enjoyment itself or felt a malicious repugnance to the idea of it in any one else? What in them took the garb of religion, with us

puts on the semblance of philosophy; and instead of dooming the heedless and refractory to hell-fire or the terrors of purgatory, our modern polemics set their disciples in the stocks of Utility, or throw all the elegant arts and amiable impulses of humanity into the Limbo of Political Economy.

R. I cannot conceive what possible connection there can be between the weak and mischievous enthusiasts you speak of, and the most enlightened reasoners of the nineteenth century. They would laugh at such a comparison.

S. Self-knowledge is the last thing which I should lay to the charge of *soi-disant* philosophers; but a man may be a bigot without a particle of religion, a monk or an Inquisitor in a plain coat and professing the most liberal opinions.

R. You still deal, as usual, in idle sarcasms and flimsy generalities. Will you descend to particulars, and state facts before you draw inferences from them?

S. In the first place then, they are mostly Scotchmen—lineal descendants of the Covenanters and Cameronians, and inspired with the true John Knox zeal for mutilating and defacing the carved work of the sanctuary——

R. Hold, hold—this is vulgar prejudice and personality——

S. But it 's the fact, and I thought you called for facts. Do you imagine if I hear a fellow in Scotland abusing the Author of Waverley, who has five hundred hearts beating in his bosom, because there is no Religion in his works, and a fellow in Westminster doing the same thing because there is no Political Economy in them, that any thing will prevent me from supposing that this is virtually the same Scotch pedlar with his pack of Utility at his back, whether he deals in tape and stays or in drawling compilations of history and reviews?

R. I did not know you had such an affection for Sir Walter——

S. I said the *Author of Waverley*. Not to like him would be not to love myself or human nature, of which he has given so many interesting specimens: though for the sake of that same human nature, I have no liking to Sir Walter. Those 'few and recent writers,' on the contrary, who by their own account 'have discovered the true principles of the greatest happiness to the greatest numbers,' are easily reconciled to the Tory and the bigot, because they here feel a certain superiority over him; but they cannot forgive the great historian of life and manners, because he has enlarged our sympathy with human happiness beyond their pragmatical limits. They are not even 'good haters:' for they hate not what degrades and afflicts, but what consoles and elevates the mind. Their plan

is to *block out* human happiness wherever they see a practicable opening to it.

R. But perhaps their notions of happiness differ from yours. They think it should be regulated by the doctrine of Utility. Whatever is incompatible with this, they regard as spurious and false, and scorn all base compromises and temporary palliatives.

S. Yes; just as the religious fanatic thinks there is no salvation out of the pale of his own communion, and damns without scruple every appearance of virtue and piety beyond it. Poor David Deans! how would he have been surprised to see all his follies—his 'right-hand defections and his left-hand compliances,' and his contempt for human learning, blossom again in a knot of sophists and professed *illuminés*! Such persons are not to be treated as philosophers and metaphysicians, but as conceited sectaries and ignorant mechanics. In neither case is the intolerant and proscribing spirit a deduction of pure reason, indifferent to consequences, but the dictate of presumption, prejudice, and spiritual pride, or a strong desire in the ELECT to narrow the privilege of salvation to as small a circle as possible, and in 'a few and recent writers' to have the whole field of happiness and argument to themselves. The enthusiasts of old did all they could to strike the present existence from under our feet to give us another—to annihilate our natural affections and worldly vanities, so as to conform us to the likeness of God: the modern sciolists offer us Utopia in lieu of our actual enjoyments; for warm flesh and blood would give us a head of clay and a heart of steel, and conform us to their own likeness—'a consummation not very devoutly to be wished!' Where is the use of getting rid of the trammels of superstition and slavery, if we are immediately to be handed over to these new ferrets and inspectors of a *Police-Philosophy*; who pay domiciliary visits to the human mind, catechise an expression, impale a sentiment, put every enjoyment to the rack, leave you not a moment's ease or respite, and imprison all the faculties in a round of cant-phrases —the Shibboleth of a party? They are far from indulging or even tolerating the strain of exulting enthusiasm expressed by Spenser:—

> 'What more felicity can fall to creature
> Than to enjoy delight with liberty,
> And to be lord of all the works of nature?
> To reign in the air from earth to highest sky,
> To feed on flowers and weeds of glorious feature,
> To taste whatever thing doth please the eye?
> Who rests not pleased with such happiness,
> Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness!'

Without air or light, they grope their way under-ground, till they are



made 'fierce with dark keeping:'[1] their attention, confined to the same dry, hard, mechanical subjects, which they have not the power nor the will to exchange for others, frets and corrodes; and soured and disappointed, they wreak their spite and mortification on all around them.

R. I cannot but think your imagination runs away with your candour. Surely the writers you are so ready to inveigh against labour hard to correct errors and reform grievances.

S. Yes; because the one affords exercise for their vanity, and the other for their spleen. They are attracted by the odour of abuses, and regale on fancied imperfections. But do you suppose they like any thing else better than they do the Government? Are they on any better terms with their own families or friends? Do they not make the lives of every one they come near a torment to them, with their pedantic notions and captious egotism? Do they not quarrel with their neighbours, placard their opponents, supplant those on their own side of the question? Are they not equally at war with the rich and the poor? And having failed (for the present) in their project of *cashiering kings*, do they not give scope to their troublesome, overbearing humour, by taking upon them to *snub* and lecture the poor *gratis*? Do they not wish to extend 'the greatest happiness to the greatest numbers,' by putting a stop to population—to relieve distress by withholding charity, to remedy disease by shutting up hospitals? Is it not a part of their favourite scheme, their nostrum, their panacea, to prevent the miseries and casualties of human life by extinguishing it in the birth? Do they not exult in the thought (and revile others who do not agree to it) of plucking the crutch from the cripple, and tearing off the bandages from the agonized limb? Is it thus they would gain converts, or make an effectual stand against acknowledged abuses, by holding up a picture of the opposite side, the most sordid, squalid, harsh, and repulsive, that narrow reasoning, a want of imagination, and a profusion of bile can make it? There is not enough of evil already in the world, but we must harden our feelings against the miseries that daily, hourly, present themselves to our notice, and set our faces against every thing that promises to afford any one the least gratification or pleasure. This is their *idea of a perfect commonwealth:* where each member performs his part in the machine, taking care of himself, and no more concerned about his neighbours, than the iron and wood-work, the pegs and nails in a spinning-jenny. Good screw! good wedge! good ten-penny nail! Are they really in earnest, or are they bribed,

[1] Lord Bacon, in speaking of the *Schoolmen*.

partly by their interests, partly by the unfortunate bias of their minds, to play the game into the adversary's hands? It looks like it; and the Government give them 'good *œillades*'—Mr. Blackwood pats them on the back—Mr. Canning grants an interview and plays the amiable—Mr. Hobhouse keeps the peace. One of them has a place at the India-House: but then nothing is said against the India-House, though the poor and pious Old Lady sweats and almost swoons at the conversations which her walls are doomed to hear, but of which she is ashamed to complain. One triumph of the *School* is to throw Old Ladies into hysterics![1] The obvious (I should still hope not the intentional) effect of the Westminster tactics is to put every volunteer on the same side *hors de combat*, who is not a zealot of the strictest sect of those they call Political Economists; to come behind you with dastard, cold-blooded malice, and trip up the heels of those stragglers whom their friends and patrons in the Quarterly have left still standing; to strip the cause of Reform (out of seeming affection to it) of every thing like a *misalliance* with elegance, taste, decency, common sense, or polite literature, (as their fellow labourers in the same vineyard had previously endeavoured to do out of acknowledged hatred) —to disgust the friends of humanity, to cheer its enemies; and for the sake of indulging their unbridled dogmatism, envy and uncharitableness, to leave nothing intermediate between the Ultra-Toryism of the courtly scribes and their own Ultra-Radicalism—between the extremes of practical wrong and impracticable right. Their, *our* antagonists will be very well satisfied with this division of the spoil:—give them the earth, and any one who chooses may take possession of the moon for them!

R. You allude to their attacks on the Edinburgh Review?

S. And to their articles on Scott's Novels, on Hospitals, on National Distress, on Moore's Life of Sheridan, and on every subject of taste, feeling, or common humanity. Sheridan, in particular, is termed 'an unsuccessful adventurer.' How gently this Jacobin jargon will fall on ears polite! This is what they call attacking principles and sparing persons: they spare the persons indeed of men in power (who have places to give away), and attack the characters of the dead or the unsuccessful with impunity! Sheridan's brilliant talents, his genius, his wit, his political firmness (which all but they

[1] This is not confined to the Westminster. A certain *Talking Potatoe* (who is now one of the props of Church and State), when he first came to this country, used to frighten some respectable old gentlewomen, who invited him to supper, by asking for a slice of the 'leg of the Saviour,' meaning a leg of Lamb; or a bit of 'the Holy Ghost pie,' meaning a pigeon-pie on the table. Ill-nature and impertinence are the same in all schools.



admire) draw forth no passing tribute of admiration; his errors, his misfortunes, and his death (which all but they deplore) claim no pity. This indeed would be to understand the doctrine of Utility to very little purpose, if it did not at the first touch weed from the breast every amiable weakness and imperfect virtue which had—never taken root there. But they make up for their utter want of sympathy with the excellences or failings of others by a proportionable self-sufficiency. Sheridan, Fox, and Burke were mere tyros and school-boys in politics compared to them, who are the 'mighty land-marks of these latter times'—ignorant of those principles of 'the greatest happiness to the greatest numbers,' which *a few and recent writers* have promulgated. It is one way of raising a pure and lofty enthusiasm, as to the capacities of the human mind, to scorn all that has gone before us. Rather say, this dwelling with overacted disgust on common frailties, and turning away with impatience from the brightest points of character, is 'a discipline of humanity,' which should be confined as much as possible to the Westminster School. Believe me, their theories and their mode of enforcing them stand in the way of reform: their philosophy is as little addressed to the head as to the heart—it is fit neither for man nor beast. It is not founded on any sympathy with the secret yearnings or higher tendencies of man's nature, but on a rankling antipathy to whatever is already best. Its object is to offend—its glory to find out and wound the tenderest part. What is not malice, is cowardice, and not candour. They attack the weak and spare the strong, to indulge their officiousness and add to their self-importance. Nothing is said in the Westminster Review of the treatment of Mr. Buckingham by the East India Company: it might lessen the writer's *sphere of utility*, as Mr. Hall goes from Leicester to Bristol *to save more souls!* They do not grapple with the rich to wrest his superfluities from him (in this they might be foiled) but trample on the poor (a safe and pick-thank office) and wrench his pittance from him with their logical instruments and lying arguments. Let their system succeed, as they pretend it would, and diffuse comfort and happiness around; and they would immediately turn against it as effeminate, insipid, and sickly; for their tastes and understandings are too strongly braced to endure any but the most unpalatable truths and the bitterest ingredients. Their benefits are extracted by the Cæsarean operation. Their happiness, in short, is that—which will never be; just as their receipt for a popular article in a newspaper or review, is one that will never be read. *Their* articles are never read, and if they are not popular, no others ought to be so. The more any flimsy stuff is read and admired, and the more service it does to the sale of

a journal, so much the more does it debauch the public taste, and render it averse to their dry and solid lucubrations. This is why they complain of the patronage of my *Sentimentalities* as one of the sins of the Edinburgh Review; and why they themselves are determined to drench the town with the most unsavoury truths, without one drop of honey to sweeten the gall. Had they felt the least regard to the ultimate success of their principles—of 'the greatest happiness to the greatest numbers,' though giving pain might be one paramount and primary motive, they would have combined this object with something like the comfort and accommodation of their unenlightened readers.

R. I see no ground for this philippic, except in your own imagination.

S. Tell me, do they not abuse poetry, painting, music? Is it, think you, for the pain or the pleasure these things give? Or because they are without eyes, ears, imaginations? Is that an excellence in them, or the fault of these arts? Why do they treat Shakespear so cavalierly? Is there any one they would set up against him—any Sir Richard Blackmore they patronise; or do they prefer Racine, as Adam Smith did before them? Or what are we to understand?

R. I can answer for it, they do not wish to pull down Shakespear in order to set up Racine on the ruins of his reputation. They think little indeed of Racine.

S. Or of Moliere either, I suppose?

R. Not much.

S. And yet these two contributed something to 'the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers;' that is, to the amusement and delight of a whole nation for the last century and a half. But that goes for nothing in the system of Utility, which is satisfied with nothing short of the good of the whole. Such benefactors of the species, as Shakespear, Racine, and Moliere, who sympathised with human character and feeling in their finest and liveliest moods, can expect little favour from 'those few and recent writers,' who scorn the Muse, and whose philosophy is a dull antithesis to human nature. Unhappy they who lived before their time! Oh! age of Louis XIV. and of Charles II., ignorant of the *Je ne sçais quoi* and of the *sçavoir vivre!* Oh! Paris built (till now) of mud! Athens, Rome, Susa, Babylon, Palmyra—barbarous structures of a barbarous period—hide your diminished heads! Ye fens and dykes of Holland, ye mines of Mexico, what are ye worth! Oh! bridges raised, palaces adorned, cities built, fields cultivated without skill or science, how came ye to exist till now! Oh! pictures, statues, temples, altars,

hearths, the poet's verse, and solemn-breathing airs, are ye not an insult on the great principles of 'a few and recent writers'? How came ye to exist without their leave? Oh! Arkwright, unacquainted with spinning-jennies! Oh, Sir Robert Peel, unversed in calico-printing! Oh! generation of upstarts, what good could have happened before your time? What ill can happen after it?

R. But at least you must allow the importance of first principles?

S. Much as I respect a dealer in marine stores, in old rags and iron: both the goods and the principles are generally stolen. I see advertised in the papers—'Elements of Political Economy, by James Mill,' and 'Principles of Political Economy, by John Macculloch.' Will you tell me in this case, whose are the First Principles? which is the true Simon Pure?

> 'Strange! that such difference there should be
> 'Twixt *Tweedle-dum* and *Tweedle-dee*!'

R. You know we make it a rule to discountenance every attempt at wit, as much as the world in general abhor a punster.

S. By your using the phrase, 'attempts at wit,' it would seem that you admit there is a true and a false wit; then why do you confound the distinction? Is this logical, or even politic?

R. The difference is not worth attending to.

S. Still, I suppose, you have a great deal of this quality, if you chose to exert it?

R. I fancy not much.

S. And yet you take upon you to despise it! I have sometimes thought that the great professors of the modern philosophy were hardly sincere in the contempt they express for poetry, painting, music, and the Fine Arts in general—that they were private *amateurs* and prodigious proficients *under the rose*, and, like other lovers, hid their passion as a weakness—that Mr. M—— turned a barrel-organ—that Mr. P—— warbled delightfully—that Mr. Pl—— had a manuscript tragedy by him, called 'The Last Man,' which he withheld from the public, not to compromise the dignity of philosophy by affording any one the smallest actual satisfaction during the term of his natural life.

R. Oh, no! you are quite mistaken in this supposition, if you are at all serious in it. So far from being proficients, or having wasted their time in these trifling pursuits, I believe not one of the persons you have named has the least taste or capacity for them, or any idea corresponding to them, except Mr. Bentham, who is fond of music, and says, with his usual *bonhomie* (which seems to increase with his

age) that he does not see why others should not find an agreeable recreation in poetry and painting.[1]

S. You are sure this cynical humour of theirs is not affectation, at least?

R. I am quite sure of it.

S. Then I am sure it is intolerable presumption in them to think their want of taste and knowledge qualifies them to judge (*ex cathedrâ*) of these Arts; or is a standard by which to measure the degree of interest which others do or ought to take in them. It is the height of impertinence, mixed up with a worse principle. As to the excesses or caprices of posthumous fame, like other commodities, it soon finds its level in the market. *Detur optimo* is a tolerably general rule. It is not of forced or factitious growth. People would not trouble their heads about Shakespear, if he had given them no pleasure, or cry him up to the skies, if he had not first raised them there. The world are not grateful *for nothing*. Shakespear, it is true, had the misfortune to be born before our time, and is not one of 'those few and recent writers,' who monopolise all true greatness and wisdom (though not the reputation of it) to themselves. He need not, however, be treated with contumely on this account: the instance might be passed over as a solitary one. We shall have a thousand Political Economists, before we have another Shakespear.

R. Your mode of arriving at conclusions is very different, I confess, from the one to which I have been accustomed, and is too wild and desultory for me to follow it. Allow me to ask in my turn, Do you not admit Utility to be the test of morals, as Reason is the test of Utility?

S. Pray, what definition have you (in the School) of Reason and of Utility?

R. Nay, they require no definition; the meaning of both is obvious.

S. Indeed, it is easy to dogmatize without definitions, and to repeat broad assertions without understanding them. Nothing is so convenient as to begin with gravely assuming our own infallibility, and we can then utter nothing but oracles, of course.

R. What is it *you* understand by Reason?

S. It is your business to answer the question; but still, if you choose, I will take the *onus* upon myself, and interpret for you.

[1] One of them has printed a poem entitled 'RHODOPE;' which, however, does not show the least taste or capacity for poetry, or any idea corresponding to it. *Bad poetry* serves to prove the existence of *good*. If all poetry were like Rhodope, the philosophic author might fulminate his anathemas against it (floods of ghastly, livid ire) as long as he pleased: but if this were poetry, there would be no occasion for so much anger: no one would read it or think any thing of it!

R. I have no objection, if you do it fairly.

S. You shall yourself be judge. Reason, with most people, means their own opinion; and I do not find your friends a particular exception to the rule. Their dogmatical tone, their arrogance, their supercilious treatment of the pretensions of others, their vulgar conceit and satisfaction in their own peculiar tenets, so far from convincing me that they are right, convince me that they must be wrong (except by accident, or by mechanically parrotting others); for no one ever thought for himself, or looked attentively at truth and nature, that did not feel his own insufficiency and the difficulty and delicacy of his task. Self-knowledge is the first step to wisdom. The *Rational Dissenters* (who took this title as a characteristic distinction, and who professed an entire superiority over prejudice and superstition of all sorts,) were as little disposed to have their opinions called in question as any people I ever knew. One of their preachers thanked God publicly for having given them a *liberal religion*. So your School thank God in their hearts for having given them a *liberal philosophy*: though what with them passes for liberal is considered by the rest of the world as very much akin to illiberality.

R. May I beseech you to come to the point at once?

S. We shall be there soon enough, without hurrying. Reason, I conceive, in the sense that you would appeal to it, may signify any one of three things, all of them insufficient as tests and standards of moral sentiment, or (if that word displeases) of moral conduct:—1. Abstract truth, as distinct from local impressions or individual partialities; 2. Calm, inflexible self-will, as distinct from passion; 3. Dry matter of fact or reality, as distinct from sentimentality or poetry.

R. Let me hear your objections; but do for once adhere to the track you have chalked out.

S. 'Thereafter as it happens.' You may drag your grating go-cart of crude assumptions and heavy paralogisms along your narrow iron rail-way, if you please: but let me diverge down 'primrose paths,' or break my neck over precipices, as I think proper.

R. Take your own course. *A wilful man must have his way.* You demur, if I apprehend you right, to founding moral rectitude on the mere dictates of the Understanding. This I grant to be the grand *arcanum* of the doctrine of Utility. I desire to know what other foundation for morals you will find so solid?

S. I know of none so flimsy. What! would you suspend all the natural and private affections on the mere logical deductions of the Understanding, and exenterate the former of all the force, tenderness, and constancy they derive from habit, local nearness or immediate

sympathy, because the last are contrary to the speculative reason of the thing? I am afraid such a speculative morality will end in speculation, or in something worse. Am I to feel no more for a friend or a relative (say) than for an inhabitant of China or of the Moon, because, as a matter of argument, or setting aside their connection with me, and considered absolutely in themselves, the objects are, perhaps, of equal value? Or am I to screw myself up to feel as much for the Antipodes (or God knows who) as for my next-door neighbours, by such a forced intellectual scale? The last is impossible; and the result of the attempt will be to make the balance even by a diminution of our natural sensibility, instead of an universal and unlimited enlargement of our philosophic benevolence. The feelings cannot be made to keep pace with our bare knowledge of existence or of truth; nor can the affections be disjoined from the impressions of time, place, and circumstance, without destroying their vital principle. Yet, without the sense of pleasure and pain, I do not see what becomes of the theory of Utility, which first reduces everything to pleasure and pain, and then tramples upon and crushes these by its own sovereign will. The effect of this system is, like the touch of the torpedo, to chill and paralyse. We, notwithstanding, find persons acting upon it with exemplary coolness and self-complacency. One of these 'subtilised savages' informs another who drops into his shop that news is come of the death of his eldest daughter, adding, as matter of boast—'I am the only person in the house who will eat any dinner to-day: *they do not understand the doctrine of Utility*!' I perceive this illustration is not quite to your taste.

R. Is it any thing more than the old doctrine of the Stoics?

S. I thought the system had been wholly new—the notable project of a 'few and recent writers.' I could furnish you with another parallel passage in the HYPOCRITE.[1]

R. Is it not as well, on any system, to suppress the indulgence of inordinate grief and violent passion, that is as useless to the dead as it is hurtful to the living?

[1] '*Old Lady Lambert.* Come, come: I wish you would follow Dr. Cantwell's precepts, whose practice is conformable to what he teaches. Virtuous man!—above all sensual regards, he considers the world merely as a collection of dirt and pebble-stones. How has he weaned me from temporal connexions! My heart is now set upon nothing sublunary; and, I thank Heaven, I am so insensible to every thing in this vile world, that I could see you, my son, my daughters, my brothers, my grandchildren, all expire before me, and mind it no more than the going out of so many snuffs of a candle.

'*Charlotte.* Upon my word, madam, it is a very humane disposition you have been able to arrive at, and your family is much obliged to the Doctor for his instructions.'—ACT II. Scene I.

S. If we could indulge our affections while they run on smoothly, and discard them from our breasts the instant they fail of their objects, it might be well. But the feelings, the habitual and rooted sentiments of the soul, are not the creatures of choice or of a fanciful theory. To take the utmost possible interest in an object, and be utterly and instantaneously indifferent to the loss of it, is not exactly in the order of human nature. We may blunt or extirpate our feelings altogether with proper study and pains, by ill-humour, conceit, and affectation, but not make them the playthings of a verbal paradox. I fancy if Mr. —— had lost a hundred pounds by a bad debt, or if a lump of soot had fallen into his broth, it would have spoiled his dinner. The doctrine of Utility would not have come to his aid here. It is reserved for great and trying occasions; or serves as an excuse for not affecting grief which its professors do not feel. So much for reason against passion.

R. But if they do not possess all the softness and endearing charities of private life, they have the firmness and unflinching hardihood of patriotism and devotion to the public cause.

S. That is what I have yet to learn. They are a kind of Ishmaelites, whose hand is *against* others—what or who they are for (except themselves) I do not know. They do not willingly come forward into the front nor even show themselves in the rear of the battle, but are very ready to denounce and disable those who are indiscreet enough to do so. They are not for precipitating a crisis, but for laying down certain general principles, which will do posterity a world of good and themselves no harm. They are a sort of *occult* reformers, and patriots *incognito*. They get snug places under Government, and mar popular Elections—but it is to advance the good of the cause. Their theories are as whole and as sleek as their skins, but that there is a certain jejuneness and poverty in both which prevents their ever putting on a wholesome or comfortable appearance.

R. But at least you will not pretend to deny the distinction (you just now hinted at) between things of real Utility and merely fanciful interest?

S. No, I admit that distinction to the full. I only wish you and others not to mistake it.

R. I have not the slightest guess at what you mean.

S. Is there any possible view of the subject that has not been canvassed over and over again in the *School*? Or do you pass over all possible objections as the dreams of idle enthusiasts? Let me ask, have you not a current dislike to any thing in the shape of sentiment or *sentimentality*? for with you they are the same. Yet

a thing and the *cant* about it are not the same. The cant about Utility does not destroy its essence. What do you mean by *sentimentality*?

R. I do not know.

S. Well: you complain, however, that things of the greatest use in reality are not always of the greatest importance in an imaginary and romantic point of view?

R. Certainly; this is the very pivot of all our well-grounded censure and dissatisfaction with poetry, novel-writing, and other things of that flimsy, unmeaning stamp.

S. It appears, then, that there are two standards of value and modes of appreciation in human life, the one practical, the other ideal,—that that which is of the greatest moment to the Understanding is often of little or none at all to the Fancy, and *vice versa*. Why then force these two standards into one? Or make the Understanding judge of what belongs to the Fancy, any more than the Fancy judge of what belongs to the Understanding? Poetry would make bad mathematics, mathematics bad poetry: why jumble them together? Leave things, that are so, separate. *Cuique tribuito suum.*

R. I do not yet comprehend your precise drift.

S. Nay, then, you will not. It is granted that a certain thing, in itself highly useful, does not afford as much pleasure to the imagination, or excite as much interest as it ought to do, or as some other thing which is of less real and practical value. But why *ought* it to excite this degree of interest, if it is not its nature to do so? Why not set it down to its proper account of Utility in any philosophical estimate—let it go for what it is worth there, *valeat quantum valet*—and let the other less worthy and (if you will) more meretricious object be left free to produce all the sentiment and emotion it is capable of, and which the former is inadequate to, and its value be estimated accordingly!

R. Will you favour me with an illustration—with any thing like common sense?

S. A table, a chair, a fire-shovel, a Dutch-stove are useful things, but they do not excite much sentiment—they are not confessedly the poetry of human life.

R. No.

S. Why then endeavour to make them so; or in other words, to make them more than they are or can become? A lute, a sonnet, a picture, the sound of distant bells can and do excite an emotion, do appeal to the fancy and the heart (excuse this antiquated phraseology!) —why then grudge them the pleasure they give to the human mind,

and which it seems, on the very face of the argument, your objects of mere downright Utility (which are not also objects of Imagination) cannot? Why must I come to your shop, though you expressly tell me you have not the article I want? Or why swear, with Lord Peter in the Tale of a Tub, that your loaf of brown bread answers all the purposes of mutton? Why deprive life of what cheers and adorns, more than of what supports it? A chair is good to sit in (as a matter of fact), a table to write on, a fire to warm one's self by—No one disputes it; but at the same time I want something else to amuse and occupy my mind, something that stirs the breath of fancy, something that but to think of is to feel an interest in. Besides my automatic existence, I have another, a sentimental one, which must be nourished and supplied with proper food. This end the mere circumstance of practical or real Utility does not answer, and therefore is so far good for nothing.

R. But is it not to be feared that this preference should be carried to excess, and that the essential should be neglected for the frivolous?

S. I see no disposition in mankind to neglect the essential. Necessity has no choice. They pursue the mechanical mechanically, as *puss* places herself by the fireside, and snuffs up the warmth:—they dream over the romantic; and when their dreams are golden ones, it is pity to disturb them. There is as little danger as possible of excess here; for the interest in things merely *ideal* can be only in proportion to the pleasure, that is, the real benefit which attends them. A calculation of consequences may deceive, the impulses of passion may hurry us away: sentiment alone is infallible, since it centres and reposes on itself. Like mercy, 'its quality is not strained: it droppeth as the gentle dew from heaven upon the place beneath!'—

R. You have asked me what Reason is: may I ask you what it is that constitutes Sentiment?

S. I have told you what Reason is: you should tell me what Sentiment is. Or I will give your learned professors and profound Encyclopedists, who lay down laws for the human mind without knowing any of the springs by which it acts, five years to make even a tolerable guess at what it is in objects that produces the fine flower of Sentiment, and what it is that leaves only the husk and stalk of Utility behind it.

R. They are much obliged to you, but I fancy their time is better employed.

S. What! in ringing the changes on the same cant-phrases, one after the other, in newspapers, reviews, lectures, octavo volumes,

examinations, and pamphlets, and seeing no more of the matter all the while than a blind horse in a mill?

R. I have already protested against this personality. But surely you would not put fiction on a par with reality?

S. My good friend, let me give you an instance of my way of thinking on this point. I met Dignum (the singer) in the street the other day: he was humming a tune; and his eye, though quenched, was smiling. I could scarcely forbear going up to speak to him. Why so? I had seen him in the year 1792 (the first time I ever was at a play), with Suett and Miss Romanzini and some others, in No Song No Supper; and ever since, that bright vision of my childhood has played round my fancy with unabated, vivid delight. Yet the whole was fictitious, your cynic philosophers will say. I wish there were but a few realities that lasted so long, and were followed with so little disappointment. The *imaginary* is what we conceive to be: it is reality that tantalizes us and turns out a fiction—that is the false Florimel!

R. But the Political Economists, in directing the attention to 'the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers,' wish to provide for the solid comforts and amelioration of human life.

S. Yes, in a very notable way, after their fashion. I should not expect from men who are jealous of the mention of any thing like enjoyment, any great anxiety about its solid comforts. Theirs is a very comfortable theory indeed! They would starve the poor outright, reduce their wages to what is barely necessary to keep them alive, and if they cannot work, refuse them a morsel for charity. If you hint at any other remedy but 'the grinding law of necessity' suspended *in terrorem* over the poor, they are in agonies and think their victims are escaping them: if you talk of the pressure of Debt and Taxes, they regard you as a very common-place person indeed, and say they can show you cases in the reign of Edward III. where, without any reference to Debt or Taxes, the price of labour was tripled—after a plague! So full is their imagination of this desolating doctrine, that sees no hope of good but in cutting off the species, that they fly to a pestilence as a resource against all our difficulties—if we had but a pestilence, it would demonstrate all their theories!

R. Leave Political Economy to those who profess it, and come back to your mystical metaphysics. Do you not place actual sensations before sentimental refinements, and think the former the first things to be attended to in a sound moral system?

S. I place the heart in the centre of my moral system, and the senses and the understanding are its two extremities. You leave nothing but gross, material objects as the ends of pursuit, and the dry,

formal calculations of the understanding as the means of ensuring them. Is this enough? Is man a mere animal, or a mere machine for philosophical experiments? All that is intermediate between these two is sentiment: I do not wonder you sometimes feel a nausea, which you endeavour to fill up with spleen and misanthropy. Can you divest the mind of habit, memory, imagination, foresight, will? Can you make it go on physical sensations, or on abstract reason alone? Not without making it over again. As it is constituted, reflection recals what sense has once embodied; imagination weaves a thousand associations round it, time endears, regret, hope, fear, innumerable shapes of uncertain good still hover near it. I hear the sound of village bells—it 'opens all the cells where memory slept' —I see a well-known prospect, my eyes are dim with manifold recollections. What say you? Am I only as a rational being to hear the sound, to see the object with my bodily sense? Is all the rest to be dissolved as an empty delusion, by the potent spell of unsparing philosophy? Or rather, have not a thousand real feelings and incidents hung upon these impressions, of which such dim traces and doubtful suggestions are all that is left? And is it not better that truth and nature should speak this imperfect but heartfelt language, than be entirely dumb? And should we not preserve and cherish this precious link that connects together the finer essence of our past and future being by some expressive symbol, rather than suffer all that cheers and sustains life to fall into the dregs of material sensations and blindfold ignorance? There, now, is half a definition of Sentiment: for the other half we must wait till we see the article in the Scotch Encyclopedia on the subject. To deprive man of sentiment, is to deprive him of all that is interesting to himself or others, except the present object and a routine of cant-phrases, and to turn him into a savage, an automaton, or a Political Economist. Nay more, if we are to feel or do nothing for which we cannot assign a precise reason, why we cannot so much as walk, speak, hear, or see, without the same unconscious, implicit faith—not a word, not a sentence but hangs together by a number of imperceptible links, and is a bundle of prejudices and abstractions.

R. I can make nothing of you or your arguments.

S. All I would say is, that you cannot take the measure of human nature with a pair of compasses or a slip of parchment: nor do I think it an auspicious opening to the new *Political Millennium* to begin with setting our faces against all that has hitherto kindled the enthusiasm, or shutting the door against all that may in future give pleasure to the world. Your Elysium resembles Dante's *Inferno*— 'Who enters there must leave all hope behind!'

R. The poets have spoiled you for all rational and sober views of men and society.

S. I had rather be wrong with them, than right with some other persons that I could mention. I do not think you have shewn much tact or consecutiveness of reasoning in your defence of the system: but you have only to transcribe the trite arguments on the subject, set your own and a bookseller's name to them, and pass off for the head of a school and one of the great lights of the age!

ESSAY XVIII

ON THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO SUCCESS IN LIFE

It is curious to consider the diversity of men's talents, and the causes of their failure or success, which are not less numerous and contradictory than their pursuits in life. Fortune does not always smile on merit:—'the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong': and even where the candidate for wealth or honours succeeds, it is as often, perhaps, from the qualifications which he wants as from those which he possesses; or the eminence which he is lucky enough to attain, is owing to some faculty or acquirement, which neither he nor any body else suspected. There is a balance of power in the human mind, by which defects frequently assist in furthering our views, as superfluous excellences are converted into the nature of impediments; and again, there is a continual substitution of one talent for another, through which we mistake the appearance for the reality, and judge (by implication) of the means from the end. So a Minister of State wields the House of Commons by his *manner* alone; while his friends and his foes are equally at a loss to account for his influence, looking for it in vain in the matter or style of his speeches. So the air with which a celebrated barrister waved a white cambrick handkerchief passed for eloquence. So the buffoon is taken for a wit. To be thought wise, it is for the most part only necessary to seem so; and the noisy demagogue is easily translated, by the popular voice, into the orator and patriot. Qualities take their colour from those that are next them, as the cameleon borrows its hue from the nearest object; and unable otherwise to grasp the phantom of our choice or our ambition, we do well to lay violent hands on something else within our reach, which bears a general resemblance to it; and the impression of which, in proportion as the thing itself is cheap and worthless, is likely to be gross, obvious,

striking, and effectual. The way to secure success, is to be more anxious about obtaining than about deserving it; the surest hindrance to it is to have too high a standard of refinement in our own minds, or too high an opinion of the discernment of the public. He who is determined not to be satisfied with any thing short of perfection, will never do any thing at all, either to please himself or others. The question is not what we ought to do, but what we *can* do for the best. An excess of modesty is in fact an excess of pride, and more hurtful to the individual, and less advantageous to society, than the grossest and most unblushing vanity—

> Aspiring to be Gods, if angels fell,
> Aspiring to be angels, men rebel.

If a celebrated artist in our own day had staid to do justice to his principal figure in a generally admired painting, before he had exhibited it, it would never have seen the light. He has passed on to other things more within his power to accomplish, and more within the competence of the spectators to understand. They see what he has done, which is a great deal—they could not have judged of, or given him credit for the *ineffable idea* in his own mind, which he might vainly have devoted his whole life in endeavouring to embody. The picture, as it is, is good enough for the age and for the public. If it had been ten times better, its merits would have been thrown away: if it had been ten times better in the more refined and lofty conception of character and sentiment, and had failed in the more palpable appeal to the senses and prejudices of the vulgar, in the usual 'appliances and means to boot,' it would never have done. The work might have been praised by a few, a very few, and the artist himself have pined in penury and neglect.—Mr. Wordsworth has given us the *essence* of poetry in his works, without the machinery, the apparatus of poetical diction, the theatrical pomp, the conventional ornaments; and we see what he has made of it. The way to fame, through merit alone, is the narrowest, the steepest, the longest, the hardest of all others—(that it is the most certain and lasting, is even a doubt)—the most sterling reputation is, after all, but a species of imposture. As for ordinary cases of success and failure, they depend on the slightest shades of character or turn of accident—'some trick not worth an egg'—

> There's but the twinkling of a star
> Betwixt a man of peace and war;
> A thief and justice, fool and knave,
> A huffing officer and a slave;

QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO SUCCESS

A crafty lawyer and pick-pocket,
A great philosopher and a blockhead;
A formal preacher and a player,
A learn'd physician and manslayer.

Men are in numberless instances qualified for certain things, for no other reason than because they are qualified for nothing else. Negative merit is the passport to negative success. In common life, the narrowness of our ideas and appetites is more favourable to the accomplishment of our designs, by confining our attention and ambition to one single object, than a greater enlargement of comprehension or susceptibility of taste, which (as far as the trammels of custom and routine of business are concerned) only operate as diversions to our ensuring the *mainchance*; and, even in the pursuit of arts and science, a dull plodding fellow will often do better than one of a more mercurial and fiery cast—the mere unconsciousness of his own deficiencies, or of any thing beyond what he himself can do, reconciles him to his mechanical progress, and enables him to perform all that lies in his power with labour and patience. By being content with mediocrity, he advances beyond it; whereas the man of greater taste or genius may be supposed to fling down his pen or pencil in despair, haunted with the idea of unattainable excellence, and ends in being nothing, because he cannot be every thing at once. Those even who have done the greatest things, were not always perhaps the greatest men. To do any given work, a man should not be greater in himself than the work he has to do; the faculties which he has beyond this, will be *faculties to let*, either not used, or used idly and unprofitably, to hinder, not to help. To do any one thing best, there should be an exclusiveness, a concentration, a bigotry, a blindness of attachment to that one object; so that the widest range of knowledge and most diffusive subtlety of intellect will not uniformly produce the most beneficial results;—and the performance is very frequently in the inverse ratio, not only of the pretensions, as we might superficially conclude, but of the real capacity. *A part is greater than the whole*; and this old saying seems to hold true in moral and intellectual questions also—in nearly all that relates to the mind of man, which cannot embrace the whole, but only a part.

I do not think (to give an instance or two of what I mean) that Milton's mind was (so to speak) greater than the Paradise Lost; it was just big enough to fill that mighty mould; the shrine contained the Godhead. Shakespear's genius was, I should say, greater than any thing he has done, because it still soared free and unconfined beyond whatever he undertook—ran over, and could not be 'constrained by mastery' of his subject. Goldsmith, in his Retaliation,



celebrates Burke as one who was kept back in his dazzling, wayward career, by the supererogation of his talents—

> Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
> Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit.

Dr. Johnson, in Boswell's Life, tells us that the only person whose conversation he ever *sought* for improvement was George Psalmanazar: yet who knows any thing of this extraordinary man now, but that he wrote about twenty volumes of the Universal History—invented a Formosan alphabet and vocabulary—being a really learned man, contrived to pass for an impostor, and died no one knows how or where! The well known author of the 'Enquiry concerning Political Justice,' in conversation has not a word to throw at a dog; all the stores of his understanding or genius he reserves for his books, and he has need of them, otherwise there would be *hiatus in manuscriptis*. He says little, and that little were better left alone, being both dull and nonsensical; his talk is as flat as a pancake, there is no leaven in it, he has not dough enough to make a loaf and a cake; he has no idea of any thing till he is wound up, like a clock, not to speak, but to write, and then he seems like a person risen from sleep or from the dead. The author of the *Diversions of Purley*, on the other hand, besides being the inventor of the theory of grammar, was a politician, a wit, a master of conversation, and overflowing with an *interminable babble* —that fellow had cut and come again in him, and

> 'Tongue with a garnish of brains;'

but it only served as an excuse to cheat posterity of the definition of a verb, by one of those conversational *ruses de guerre* by which he put off his guests at Wimbledon with some teazing equivoque which he would explain the next time they met—and made him die at last with a nostrum in his mouth! The late Professor Porson was said to be a match for the Member for Old Sarum in argument and raillery:—he was a profound scholar, and had wit at will—yet what did it come to? His jests have evaporated with the marks of the wine on the tavern table; the page of Thucydides or Æschylus, which was stamped on his brain, and which he could read there with equal facility backwards or forwards, is contained, after his death, as it was while he lived, just as well in the volume on the library shelf. The man of perhaps the greatest ability now living is the one who has not only done the least, but who is actually incapable of ever doing any thing worthy of him—unless he had a hundred hands to write with, and a hundred mouths to utter all that it hath entered into his heart to conceive, and centuries before him to embody the endless

volume of his waking dreams. Cloud rolls over cloud; one train of thought suggests and is driven away by another; theory after theory is spun out of the bowels of his brain, not like the spider's web, compact and round, a citadel and a snare, built for mischief and for use; but, like the gossamer, stretched out and entangled without end, clinging to every casual object, flitting in the idle air, and glittering only in the ray of fancy. No subject can come amiss to him, and he is alike attracted and alike indifferent to all—he is not tied down to any one in particular—but floats from one to another, his mind every where finding its level, and feeling no limit but that of thought—now soaring with its head above the stars, now treading with fairy feet among flowers, now winnowing the air with winged words—passing from Duns Scotus to Jacob Behmen, from the Kantean philosophy to a conundrum, and from the Apocalypse to an acrostic—taking in the whole range of poetry, painting, wit, history, politics, metaphysics, criticism, and private scandal—every question giving birth to some new thought, and every thought 'discoursed in eloquent music,' that lives only in the ear of fools, or in the report of absent friends. Set him to write a book, and he belies all that has been ever said about him—

> Ten thousand great ideas filled his mind,
> But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

Now there is ——, who never had an idea in his life, and who therefore has never been prevented by the fastidious refinements of self-knowledge, or the dangerous seductions of the Muse, from succeeding in a number of things which he has attempted, to the utmost extent of his dulness, and contrary to the advice and opinion of all his friends. He has written a book without being able to spell, by dint of asking questions—has painted draperies with great exactness, which have passed for finished portraits—daubs in an unaccountable figure or two, with a back-ground, and on due deliberation calls it history—he is dubbed an Associate after being twenty times black-balled, wins his way to the highest honours of the Academy, through all the gradations of discomfiture and disgrace, and may end in being made a foreign Count! And yet (such is the principle of distributive justice in matters of taste) he is just where he was. We judge of men not by what they do, but by what they are. *Non ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius.* Having once got an idea of ——, it is impossible that any thing he can do should ever alter it—though he were to paint like Raphael and Michael Angelo, no one in the secret would give him credit for it, and 'though he had all knowledge, and could speak with the tongues of angels,' yet without genius he would be

nothing. The original sin of being what he is, renders his good works and most meritorious efforts null and void. 'You cannot gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.' Nature still prevails over art. You look at ——, as you do at a curious machine, which performs certain puzzling operations, and as your surprise ceases, gradually unfolds other powers which you would little expect—but do what it will, it is but a machine still; the *thing* is without a soul!

Respice finem, is the great rule in all practical pursuits: to attain our journey's end, we should look little to the right or to the left; the knowledge of excellence as often deters and distracts, as it stimulates the mind to exertion; and hence we may see some reason, why the general diffusion of taste and liberal arts is not always accompanied with an increase of individual genius.

As there is a degree of dulness and phlegm, which, in the long run, sometimes succeeds better than the more noble and aspiring impulses of our nature (as the beagle by its sure tracing overtakes the bounding stag), so there is a degree of animal spirits and showy accomplishment, which enables its possessors 'to get the start of the majestic world,' and bear the palm alone. How often do we see vivacity and impertinence mistaken for wit; fluency for argument; sound for sense; a loud or musical voice for eloquence! Impudence again is an equivalent for courage; and the assumption of merit and the possession of it are too often considered as one and the same thing. On the other hand, simplicity of manner reduces the person who cannot so far forego his native disposition as by any effort to shake it off, to perfect insignificance in the eyes of the vulgar, who, if you do not seem to doubt your own pretensions, will never question them; and on the same principle, if you do not try to palm yourself on them for what you are not, will never be persuaded you can be any thing. Admiration, like mocking, is catching: and the good opinion which gets abroad of us begins at home. If a man is not as much astonished at his own acquirements—as proud of and as delighted with the bauble, as others would be if put into sudden possession of it, they hold that true desert and he must be strangers to each other: if he entertains an idea beyond his own immediate profession or pursuit, they think very wisely he can know nothing at all: if he does not play off the quack or the coxcomb upon them at every step, they are confident he is a dunce and a fellow of no pretensions. It has been sometimes made a matter of surprise that Mr. Pitt did not talk politics out of the House; or that Mr. Fox conversed like any one else on common subjects; or that Walter Scott is fonder of an old Scotch ditty or antiquarian record, than of listening to the praises of the Author of Waverley. On the contrary, I cannot conceive

how any one who feels conscious of certain powers, should always be labouring to convince others of the fact; or how a person, to whom their exercise is as familiar as the breath he draws, should think it worth his while to convince them of what to him must seem so very simple, and at the same time, so very evident. I should not wonder, however, if the author of the Scotch Novels laid an undue stress on the praises of the Monastery. We nurse the ricketty child, and prop up our want of self-confidence by the opinion of friends. A man (unless he is a fool) is never *vain*, but when he stands in need of the tribute of adulation to strengthen the hollowness of his pretensions; nor *conceited*, but when he can find no one to flatter him, and is obliged secretly to pamper his good opinion of himself, to make up for the want of sympathy in others. A *damned* author has the highest sense of his own merits, and an inexpressible contempt for the judgment of his contemporaries; in the same manner that an actor who is hissed or hooted from the stage, creeps into exquisite favour with himself, in proportion to the blindness and injustice of the public. A prose-writer, who has been severely handled in the Reviews, will try to persuade himself that there is nobody else who can write a word of English: and we have seen a poet of our time, whose works have been much, but not (as he thought) sufficiently admired, undertake formally to prove, that no poet, who deserved the name of one, was ever popular in his life-time, or scarcely after his death!

There is nothing that floats a man sooner into the tide of reputation, or oftener passes current for genius, than what might be called *constitutional talent*. A man without this, whatever may be his worth or real powers, will no more get on in the world than a leaden Mercury will fly into the air; as any pretender with it, and with no one quality beside to recommend him, will be sure either to blunder upon success, or will set failure at defiance. By constitutional talent I mean, in general, the warmth and vigour given to a man's ideas and pursuits by his bodily *stamina*, by mere physical organization. A weak mind in a sound body is better, or at least more profitable, than a sound mind in a weak and crazy conformation. How many instances might I quote! Let a man have a quick circulation, a good digestion, the bulk, and thews, and sinews of a man, and the alacrity, the unthinking confidence inspired by these; and without an atom, a shadow of the *mens divinior*, he shall strut and swagger and vapour and jostle his way through life, and have the upper-hand of those who are his betters in every thing but health and strength. His jests shall be echoed with loud laughter, because his own lungs begin to crow like chanticleer, before he has

off like the ring on the finger, fluttering and sparkling in our sight, relieve us from the irksome task of seeking out obscure merit: the scroll of virtues written on the bold front, or triumphing in the laughing eye, save us the trouble of sifting the evidence and deciding for ourselves: besides, our self-love receives a less sensible shock from encountering the mere semblance than the solid substance of worth; folly chuckles to find the blockhead put over the wise man's head, and cunning winks to see the knave, by his own good leave, transformed into a saint.

'Doubtless, the pleasure is as great
In being cheated, as to cheat.'

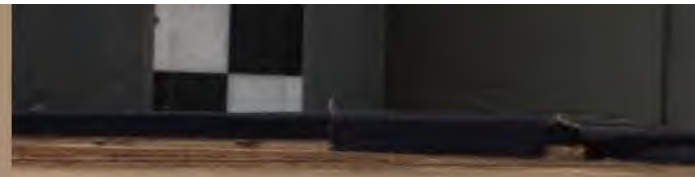
In all cases, there seems a sort of compromise, a principle of collusion between imposture and credulity. If you ask what sort of adventurers have swindled tradesmen of their goods, you will find they are all *likely* men, with plausible manners or a handsome equipage, hired on purpose:—if you ask what sort of gallants have robbed women of their hearts, you will find they are those who have jilted hundreds before, from which the willing fair conceives the project of fixing the truant to herself—so the bird flutters its idle wings in the jaws of destruction, and the foolish moth rushes into the flame that consumes it! *There is no trusting to appearances*, we are told; but this maxim is of no avail, for men are the eager dupes of them. Life, it has been said, is 'the art of being well deceived;' and accordingly, hypocrisy seems to be the great business of mankind. The game of fortune is, for the most part, set up with counters; so that he who will not cut in because he has no gold in his pocket, must sit out above half his time, and lose his chance of sweeping the tables. Delicacy is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, considered as rusticity; and sincerity of purpose is the greatest affront that can be offered to society. To insist on simple truth, is to disqualify yourself for place or patronage—the less you deserve, the more merit in their encouraging you; and he who, in the struggle for distinction, trusts to realities and not to appearances, will in the end find himself the object of universal hatred and scorn. A man who thinks to gain and keep the public ear by the force of style, will find it very up-hill work; if you wish to pass for a great author, you ought not to look as if you were ignorant that you had ever written a sentence or discovered a single truth. If you keep your own secret, be assured the world will keep it for you. A writer, whom I know very well, cannot gain an admission to Drury-lane Theatre, because he does not lounge into the lobbies, or sup at the Shakespear—nay, the same person having written upwards of sixty columns of original matter on politics,

criticism, belles-lettres, and *virtù* in a respectable Morning Paper, in a single half-year, was, at the end of that period, on applying for a renewal of his engagement, told by the Editor 'he might give in a specimen of what he could do!' One would think sixty columns of the Morning Chronicle were a sufficient specimen of what a man could do. But while this person was thinking of his next answer to Vetus, or his account of Mr. Kean's performance of Hamlet, he had neglected 'to point the toe,' to hold up his head higher than usual (having acquired a habit of poring over books when young), and to get a new velvet collar to an old-fashioned great coat. These are 'the graceful ornaments to the columns of a newspaper—the Corinthian capitals of a polished style!' This unprofitable servant of the press found no difference in himself before or after he became known to the readers of the Morning Chronicle, and it accordingly made no difference in his appearance or pretensions. 'Don't you remember,' says Gray, in one of his letters, 'Lord C—— and Lord M—— who are now great statesmen, little dirty boys playing at cricket? For my own part, I don't feel myself a bit taller, or older, or wiser, than I did then.' It is no wonder that a poet, who thought in this manner of himself, was hunted from college to college,—has left us so few precious specimens of his fine powers, and shrunk from his reputation into a silent grave!

'I never knew a man of genius a coxcomb in dress,' said a man of genius and a sloven in dress. I *do* know a man of genius who is a coxcomb in his dress, and in every thing else. But let that pass.

'C'est un mauvais métier que celui de médire.'

I also know an artist who has at least the ambition and the boldness of genius, who has been reproached with being a coxcomb, and with affecting singularity in his dress and demeanour. If he is a coxcomb that way, he is not so in himself, but a rattling hair-brained fellow, with a great deal of unconstrained gaiety, and impetuous (not to say turbulent) life of mind! Happy it is when a man's exuberance of self-love flies off to the circumference of a broad-brimmed hat, descends to the toes of his shoes, or carries itself off with the peculiarity of his gait, or even vents itself in a little professional quackery;—and when he seems to think sometimes of you, sometimes of himself, and sometimes of others, and you do not feel it necessary to pay to him all the finical devotion, or to submit to be treated with the scornful neglect of a proud beauty, or some Prince Prettyman. It is well to be something besides the coxcomb, for our own sake as well as that of others; but to be born wholly without this faculty or



gift of Providence, a man had better have had a stone tied about his neck, and been cast into the sea.

In general, the consciousness of internal power leads rather to a disregard of, than a studied attention to external appearance. The wear and tear of the mind does not improve the sleekness of the skin, or the elasticity of the muscles. The burthen of thought weighs down the body like a porter's burthen. A man cannot stand so upright or move so briskly under it as if he had nothing to carry in his head or on his shoulders. The rose on the cheek and the canker at the heart do not flourish at the same time; and he who has much to think of, must take many things to heart; for thought and feeling are one. He who can truly say, *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*, has a world of cares on his hands, which nobody knows any thing of but himself. This is not one of the least miseries of a studious life. The common herd do not by any means give him full credit for his gratuitous sympathy with their concerns; but are struck with his lack-lustre eye and wasted appearance. They cannot translate the expression of his countenance out of the vulgate; they mistake the knitting of his brows for the frown of displeasure, the paleness of study for the languor of sickness, the furrows of thought for the regular approaches of old age. They read his looks, not his books; have no clue to penetrate the last recesses of the mind, and attribute the height of abstraction to more than an ordinary share of stupidity. 'Mr. —— never seems to take the slightest interest in any thing,' is a remark I have often heard made in a whisper. People do not like your philosopher at all, for he does not look, say, or think as they do; and they respect him still less. The majority go by personal appearances, not by proofs of intellectual power; and they are quite right in this, for they are better judges of the one than of the other. There is a large party who undervalue Mr. Kean's acting, (and very properly, as far as they are concerned,) for they can see that he is a little ill-made man, but they are incapable of entering into the depth and height of the passion in his Othello. A nobleman of high rank, sense, and merit, who had accepted an order of knighthood, on being challenged for so doing by a friend, as a thing rather degrading to him than otherwise, made answer—'What you say, may be very true; but I am a little man, and am sometimes jostled, and treated with very little ceremony in walking along the streets; now the advantage of this new honour will be that when people see the star at my breast, they will every one make way for me with the greatest respect.' Pope bent himself double and ruined his constitution by over-study when young. He was hardly indemnified by all his posthumous fame, 'the flattery that soothes the dull cold ear of death,' nor by the

admiration of his friends, nor the friendship of the great, for the distortion of his person, the want of robust health, and the insignificant figure he made in the eyes of strangers, and of Lady Mary Wortley Montague. Not only was his diminutive and mis-shapen form against him in such trivial toys, but it was made a set-off and a bar to his poetical pretensions by his brother-poets, who ingeniously converted the initial and final letters of his name into the invidious appellation A. P. E. He probably had the passage made under-ground from his garden to his grotto, that he might not be rudely gazed at in crossing the road by some untutored clown; and perhaps started to see the worm he trod upon writhed into his own form, like Elshie the Black Dwarf. Let those who think the mind everything and the body nothing, 'ere we have shuffled off this mortal coil,' read that fine moral fiction, or the real story of David Ritchie—believe and tremble![1]

It may be urged that there is a remedy for all this in the appeal from the ignorant many to the enlightened few. But the few who are judges of what is called real and solid merit, are not forward to communicate their occult discoveries to others; they are withheld partly by envy, and partly by pusillanimity. The strongest minds are by rights the most independent and ingenious: but then they are competitors in the lists, and jealous of the prize. The prudent (and the wise are prudent!) only add their hearty applause to the acclamations of the multitude, which they can neither silence nor dispute. So Mr. Gifford dedicated those verses to Mr. Hoppner, when securely seated on the heights of fame and fortune, which before he thought might have savoured too much of flattery or friendship. Those even who have the sagacity to discover it, seldom volunteer to introduce obscure merit into publicity, so as to endanger their own pretensions: they praise the world's idols, and bow down at the altars which they cannot overturn by violence or undermine by stealth! Suppose literary men to be the judges and vouchers for literary merit:

[1] It is more desirable to be the handsomest than the wisest man in his Majesty's dominions, for there are more people who have eyes than understandings. Sir John Suckling tells us that

> He prized black eyes and a lucky hit
> At bowls, above all the trophies of wit.

In like manner, I would be permitted to say, that I am somewhat sick of this trade of authorship, where the critics look askance at one's best-meant efforts, but am still fond of those athletic exercises, where they do not keep two scores to mark the game, with Whig and Tory notches. The accomplishments of the body are obvious and clear to all: those of the mind are recondite and doubtful, and therefore grudgingly acknowledged, or held up as the sport of prejudice, spite, and folly.

—but it may sometimes happen that a literary man (however high in genius or in fame) has no passion but the love of distinction, and hates every person or thing that interferes with his inadmissible and exorbitant claims. Dead to every other interest, he is alive to that, and starts up, like a serpent when trod upon, out of the slumber of wounded pride. The cold slime of indifference is turned into rank poison at the sight of your approach to an equality or competition with himself. If he is an old acquaintance, he would keep you always where you were, under his feet to be trampled on: if a new one, he wonders he never heard of you before. As you become known, he expresses a greater contempt for you, and grows more captious and uneasy. The more you strive to merit his good word, the farther you are from it. Such characters will not only sneer at your well-meant endeavours, and keep silent as to your good qualities, but are out of countenance, 'quite chop-fallen,' if they find you have a cup of water, or a crust of bread. It is only when you are in a jail, starved or dead, that their exclusive pretensions are safe, or their Argus-eyed suspicions laid asleep. This is a true copy, nor is it taken from one sitting, or a single subject.—An author now-a-days, to succeed, must be something more than an author,—a nobleman, or rich plebeian: the simple literary character is not enough. 'Such a poor forked animal,' as a mere poet or philosopher turned loose upon public opinion, has no chance against the flocks of bats and owls that instantly assail him. It is name, it is wealth, it is title and influence that mollifies the tender-hearted Cerberus of criticism—first, by placing the honorary candidate for fame out of the reach of Grub-street malice; secondly, by holding out the prospect of a dinner or a vacant office to successful sycophancy. This is the reason why a certain Magazine praises Percy Bysshe Shelley, and villifies 'Johnny Keats:'[1] they know very well that they cannot ruin the one in fortune as well as in fame, but they may ruin the other in both, deprive him of a livelihood together with his good name, send him *to Coventry*, and into the Rules of a prison; and this is a double incitement to the exercise of their laudable and legitimate vocation. We do not hear that they plead the good-natured motive of the Editor of the Quarterly Review, that 'they did it for his good,' because some one, in consequence of that critic's abuse, had sent the author a present of five-and-twenty pounds! One of these writers went so far, in a sort of general profession of literary servility, as to declare broadly that there had been no great English poet, and that no one had a right to pretend to the character of a man of genius in

[1] Written in June 1820.

this country, who was not of patrician birth—or connections by marriage! This hook was well baited.

> These are the *doctrines* that enrich the shops,
> That pass with reputation through the land,
> And bring their authors an immortal name.

It is the sympathy of the public with the spite, jealousy, and irritable humours of the writers, that nourishes this disease in the public mind; this, this 'embalms and spices to the April day again,' what otherwise 'the spital and the lazar-house would heave the gorge at!'

ESSAY XIX

ON THE LOOK OF A GENTLEMAN

'The nobleman-look? Yes, I know what you mean very well: that look which a nobleman should have, rather than what they have generally now. The Duke of Buckingham (Sheffield[1]) was a genteel man, and had a great deal the look you speak of. Wycherley was a very genteel man, and had the nobleman-look as much as the Duke of Buckingham.—POPE.

He instanced it too in Lord Peterborough, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Hinchinbroke, the Duke of Bolton, and two or three more.'—SPENCE'S *Anecdotes of Pope*.

I HAVE chosen the above motto to a very delicate subject, which in prudence I might let alone. I, however, like the title; and will try, at least, to make a sketch of it.

What it is that constitutes the look of a gentleman is more easily felt than described. We all know it when we see it; but we do not know how to account for it, or to explain in what it consists. *Causa latet, res ipsa notissima.* Ease, grace, dignity have been given as the exponents and expressive symbols of this look; but I would rather say, that an habitual self-possession determines the appearance of a gentleman. He should have the complete command, not only over his countenance, but over his limbs and motions. In other words, he should discover in his air and manner a voluntary power over his whole body, which with every inflection of it, should be under the controul of his will. It must be evident that he looks and does as he likes, without any restraint, confusion, or awkwardness. He is, in fact, master of his person, as the professor of any art or

[1] Quere, Villiers, because in another place it is said, that 'when the latter entered the presence-chamber, he attracted all eyes by the handsomeness of his person, and the gracefulness of his demeanour.'

science is of a particular instrument; he directs it to what use he pleases and intends. Wherever this power and facility appear, we recognise the look and deportment of the gentleman,—that is, of a person who by his habits and situation in life, and in his ordinary intercourse with society, has had little else to do than to study those movements, and that carriage of the body, which were accompanied with most satisfaction to himself, and were calculated to excite the approbation of the beholder. Ease, it might be observed, is not enough; dignity is too much. There must be a certain *retenu*, a conscious decorum, added to the first,—and a certain 'familiarity of regard, quenching the austere countenance of controul,' in the other, to answer to our conception of this character. Perhaps propriety is as near a word as any to denote the manners of the gentleman; elegance is necessary to the fine gentleman; dignity is proper to noblemen; and majesty to kings!

Wherever this constant and decent subjection of the body to the mind is visible in the customary actions of walking, sitting, riding, standing, speaking, &c. we draw the same conclusion as to the individual,—whatever may be the impediments or unavoidable defects in the machine, of which he has the management. A man may have a mean or disagreeable exterior, may halt in his gait, or have lost the use of half his limbs; and yet he may shew this habitual attention to what is graceful and becoming in the use he makes of all the power he has left,—in the 'nice conduct' of the most unpromising and impracticable figure. A hump-backed or deformed man does not necessarily look like a clown or a mechanic; on the contrary, from his care in the adjustment of his appearance, and his desire to remedy his defects, he for the most part acquires something of the look of a gentleman. The common nick-name of *My Lord*, applied to such persons, has allusion to this—to their circumspect deportment, and tacit resistance to vulgar prejudice. Lord Ogleby, in the Clandestine Marriage, is as crazy a piece of elegance and refinement, even after he is 'wound up for the day,' as can well be imagined; yet in the hands of a genuine actor, his tottering step, his twitches of the gout, his unsuccessful attempts at youth and gaiety, take nothing from the nobleman. He has the *ideal* model in his mind, resents his deviations from it with proper horror, recovers himself from any ungraceful action as soon as possible; does all he can with his limited means, and fails in his just pretensions, not from inadvertence, but necessity. Sir Joseph Banks, who was almost bent double, retained to the last the look of a privy-counsellor. There was all the firmness and dignity that could be given by the sense of his own importance to so distorted and disabled a trunk. Sir

ON THE LOOK OF A GENTLEMAN

Charles B-nb-ry, as he saunters down St. James's-street, with a large slouched hat, a lack-lustre eye, and aquiline nose, an old shabby drab-coloured coat, buttoned across his breast without a cape,—with old top-boots, and his hands in his waistcoat or breeches' pockets, as if he were strolling along his own garden-walks, or over the turf at Newmarket, after having made his bets secure,—presents nothing very dazzling, or graceful, or dignified to the imagination; though you can tell infallibly at the first glance, or even a bow-shot off, that he is a gentleman of the first water (the same that sixty years ago married the beautiful Lady Sarah L-nn-x, with whom the king was in love). What is the clue to this mystery? It is evident that his person costs him no more trouble than an old glove. His limbs are, as it were, left to take care of themselves; they move of their own accord; he does not strut or stand on tip-toe to show

—— how tall
His person is above them all;——

but he seems to find his own level, and wherever he is, to slide into his place naturally; he is equally at home among lords or gamblers; nothing can discompose his fixed serenity of look and purpose; there is no mark of superciliousness about him, nor does it appear as if any thing could meet his eye to startle or throw him off his guard; he neither avoids nor courts notice; but the *archaism* of his dress may be understood to denote a lingering partiality for the costume of the last age, and something like a prescriptive contempt for the finery of this. The old one-eyed Duke of Queensbury is another example that I might quote. As he sat in his bow-window in Piccadilly, erect and emaciated, he seemed like a nobleman framed and glazed, or a well-dressed mummy of the court of George II.

We have few of these precious specimens of the gentleman or nobleman-look now remaining; other considerations have set aside the exclusive importance of the character, and of course, the jealous attention to the outward expression of it. Where we oftenest meet with it now-a-days, is, perhaps, in the butlers in old families, or the valets, and 'gentlemen's gentlemen' of the younger branches. The sleek pursy gravity of the one answers to the stately air of some of their *quondam* masters; and the flippancy and finery of our old-fashioned beaux, having been discarded by the heirs to the title and estate, have been retained by their lacqueys. The late Admiral Byron (I have heard N—— say) had a butler, or steward, who, from constantly observing his master, had so learned to mimic him—the look, the manner, the voice, the bow were so alike—he was so 'subdued to the very quality of his lord'—that it was difficult to

distinguish them apart. Our modern footmen, as we see them fluttering and lounging in lobbies, or at the doors of ladies' carriages, bedizened in lace and powder, with ivory-headed cane and embroidered gloves, give one the only idea of the fine gentleman of former periods, as they are still occasionally represented on the stage; and indeed our theatrical heroes, who top such parts, might be supposed to have copied, as a last resource, from the heroes of the shoulder-knot. We also sometimes meet with a straggling personation of this character, got up in common life from pure romantic enthusiasm, and on absolutely ideal principles. I recollect a well-grown comely haberdasher, who made a practice of walking every day from Bishop'sgate-street to Pall-mall and Bond-street with the undaunted air and strut of a general-officer; and also a prim undertaker, who regularly tendered his person, whenever the weather would permit, from the neighbourhood of Camberwell into the favourite promenades of the city, with a mincing gait that would have become a gentleman-usher of the black-rod. What a strange infatuation to live in a dream of being taken for what one is not,—in deceiving others, and at the same time ourselves; for no doubt these persons believed that they thus appeared to the world in their true characters, and that their assumed pretensions did no more than justice to their real merits.

> *Dress* makes the man, and want of it the fellow:
> The rest is all but leather and prunella.

I confess, however, that I admire this look of a gentleman, more when it rises from the level of common life, and bears the stamp of intellect, than when it is formed out of the mould of adventitious circumstances. I think more highly of Wycherley than I do of Lord Hinchinbroke, for looking like a lord. In the one, it was the effect of native genius, grace, and spirit; in the other, comparatively speaking, of pride or custom. A visitor complimenting Voltaire on the growth and flourishing condition of some trees in his grounds, 'Aye,' said the French wit, 'they have nothing else to do!' A lord has nothing to do but to look like a lord: our comic poet had something else to do, and did it![1]

Though the disadvantages of nature or accident do not act as obstacles to the look of a gentleman, those of education and employment do. A shoe-maker, who is bent in two over his daily task; a taylor who sits cross-legged all day; a ploughman, who wears clog-shoes over the furrowed miry soil, and can hardly drag his feet after

[1] Wycherley was a great favourite with the Duchess of Cleveland.

him; a scholar who has pored all his life over books,—are not likely to possess that natural freedom and ease, or to pay that strict attention to personal appearances, that the look of a gentleman implies. I might add, that a man-milliner behind a counter, who is compelled to show every mark of complaisance to his customers, but hardly expects common civility from them in return; or a sheriff's officer, who has a consciousness of power, but none of good-will to or from any body, —are equally remote from the *beau ideal* of this character. A man who is awkward from bashfulness is a clown,—as one who is shewing off a number of impertinent airs and graces at every turn, is a coxcomb, or an upstart. Mere awkwardness or rusticity of behaviour may arise, either from want of presence of mind in the company of our *betters*, (the commonest hind goes about his regular business without any of the *mauvaise honte*,) from a deficiency of breeding, as it is called, in not having been taught certain fashionable accomplishments—or from unremitting application to certain sorts of mechanical labour, unfitting the body for general or indifferent uses. (That vulgarity which proceeds from a total disregard of decorum, and want of careful controul over the different actions of the body—such as loud speaking, boisterous gesticulations, &c.—is rather rudeness and violence, than awkwardness or uneasy restraint.) Now the gentleman is free from all these causes of ungraceful demeanour. He is independent in his circumstances, and is used to enter into society on equal terms; he is taught the modes of address and forms of courtesy, most commonly practised and most proper to ingratiate him into the good opinion of those he associates with; and he is relieved from the necessity of following any of those laborious trades or callings which cramp, strain, and distort the human frame. He is not bound to do any one earthly thing; to use any exertion, or put himself in any posture, that is not perfectly easy and graceful, agreeable and becoming. Neither is he (at the present day) required to excel in any art or science, game or exercise. He is supposed qualified to dance a minuet, not to dance on the tight rope—to stand upright, not to stand on his head. He has only to sacrifice to the Graces. Alcibiades threw away a flute, because the playing on it discomposed his features. Take the fine gentleman out of the common boarding-school or drawing-room accomplishments, and set him to any ruder or more difficult task, and he will make but a sorry figure. Ferdinand in the Tempest, when he is put by Prospero to carry logs of wood, does not strike us as a very heroical character, though he loses nothing of the king's son. If a young gallant of the first fashion were asked to shoe a horse, or hold a plough, or fell a tree, he would make a very ridiculous business of the first experiment. I saw a set

of young naval officers, very genteel-looking young men, playing at rackets not long ago, and it is impossible to describe the uncouthness of their motions and unaccountable contrivances for hitting the ball. —Something effeminate as well as common-place, then, enters into the composition of the gentleman: he is a little of the *petit-maître* in his pretensions. He is only graceful and accomplished in those things to which he has paid almost his whole attention,—such as the carriage of his body, and adjustment of his dress; and to which he is of sufficient importance in the scale of society to attract the idle attention of others.

A man's manner of presenting himself in company is but a superficial test of his real qualifications. Serjeant Atkinson, we are assured by Fielding, would have marched, at the head of his platoon, up to a masked battery, with less apprehension than he came into a room full of pretty women. So we may sometimes see persons look foolish enough on entering a party, or returning a salutation, who instantly feel themselves at home, and recover all their self-possession, as soon as any of that sort of conversation begins from which nine-tenths of the company retire in the extremest trepidation, lest they should betray their ignorance or incapacity. A high spirit and stubborn pride are often accompanied with an unprepossessing and unpretending appearance. The greatest heroes do not shew it by their looks. There are individuals of a nervous habit, who might be said to abhor their own persons, and to startle at their own appearance, as the peacock tries to hide its legs. They are always shy, uncomfortable, restless; and all their actions are, in a manner, at cross-purposes with themselves. This, of course, destroys the look we are speaking of, from the want of ease and self-confidence. There is another sort who have too much negligence of manner and contempt for formal punctilios. They take their full swing in whatever they are about, and make it seem almost necessary to get out of their way. Perhaps something of this bold, licentious, slovenly, lounging character may be objected by a fastidious eye to the appearance of Lord C——. It might be said of him, without disparagement, that he looks more like a lord than like a gentleman. We see nothing petty or finical, assuredly,—nothing hard-bound or reined-in,—but a flowing outline, a broad free style. He sits in the House of Commons, with his hat slouched over his forehead, and a sort of stoop in his shoulders, as if he cowered over his antagonists, like a bird of prey over its quarry,—'hatching vain empires.' There is an irregular grandeur about him, an unwieldy power, loose, disjointed, 'voluminous and vast,'—coiled up in the folds of its own purposes,—cold, death-like, smooth and smiling,—that is neither quite at ease with itself, nor safe

for others to approach! On the other hand, there is the Marquis Wellesley, a jewel of a man. He advances into his place in the House of Lords, with head erect, and his best foot foremost. The star sparkles on his breast, and the garter is seen bound tight below his knee. It might be thought that he still trod a measure on soft carpets, and was surrounded, not only by spiritual and temporal lords, but

> Stores of ladies, whose bright eyes
> Rain influence, and judge the prize.

The chivalrous spirit that shines through him, the air of gallantry in his personal as well as rhetorical appeals to the House, glances a partial lustre on the Woolsack as he addresses it; and makes Lord Erskine raise his sunken head from a dream of transient popularity. His heedless vanity throws itself unblushingly on the unsuspecting candour of his hearers, and ravishes mute admiration. You would almost guess of this nobleman beforehand that he was a Marquis—something higher than an earl, and less important than a duke. Nature has just fitted him for the niche he fills in the scale of rank or title. He is a finished miniature-picture set in brilliants: Lord C—— might be compared to a loose sketch in oil, not properly hung. The character of the one is ease, of the other, elegance. Elegance is something more than ease; it is more than a freedom from awkwardness or restraint. It implies, I conceive, a precision, a polish, a sparkling effect, spirited yet delicate, which is perfectly exemplified in Lord Wellesley's face and figure.

The greatest contrast to this little lively nobleman was the late Lord Stanhope. Tall above his peers, he presented an appearance something between a Patagonian chief and one of the Long Parliament. With his long black hair, 'unkempt and wild'—his black clothes, lank features, strange antics, and screaming voice, he was the Orson of debate.

> A Satyr that comes staring from the woods,
> Cannot at first speak like an orator.

Yet he was both an orator and a wit in his way. His harangues were an odd jumble of logic and mechanics, of the Statutes at large and Joe Miller jests, of stern principle and sly humour, of shrewdness and absurdity, of method and madness. What is more extraordinary, he was an honest man. He was out of his place in the House of Lords. He particularly delighted in his eccentric onsets, to make havoc of the bench of bishops. 'I like,' said he, 'to argue with one of my lords the bishops; and the reason why I do so is, that I



country; but here, we will suppose, are a knot of people got together, who, having no serious wants of their own, with leisure and independence, and caring little about abstract truth or practical utility, are met for no mortal purpose but to say and to do all manner of obliging things, to pay the greatest possible respect, and shew the most delicate and flattering attentions to one another. The politest set of gentlemen and ladies in the world can do no more than this. The laws that regulate this species of select and fantastic society are conformable to its ends and origin. The fine gentleman or lady must not, on any account, say a rude thing to the persons present, but you may turn them into the utmost ridicule the instant they are gone: nay, not to do so is sometimes considered as an indirect slight to the party that remains. You must compliment your bitterest foe to his face, and may slander your dearest friend behind his back. The last may be immoral, but it is not unmannerly. The gallant maintains his title to this character by treating every woman he meets with the same marked and unremitting attention as if she was his mistress: the courtier treats every man with the same professions of esteem and kindness as if he were an accomplice with him in some plot against mankind. Of course, these professions, made only to please, go for nothing in practice. To insist on them afterwards as literal obligations, would be to betray an ignorance of this kind of interlude, or masquerading in real life. To ruin your friend at play is not inconsistent with the character of a gentleman and a man of honour, if it is done with civility; though to warn him of his danger, so as to imply a doubt of his judgment, or interference with his will, would be to subject yourself to be run through the body with a sword. It is that which wounds the self-love of the individual that is offensive —that which flatters it that is welcome—however salutary the one, or however fatal the other may be. A habit of plain-speaking is totally contrary to the tone of good-breeding. You must prefer the opinion of the company to your own, and even to truth. I doubt whether a gentleman must not be of the Established Church, and a Tory. A true cavalier can only be a martyr to prejudice or fashion. A Whig lord appears to me as great an anomaly as a patriot king. A sectary is sour and unsociable. A philosopher is quite out of the question. He is in the clouds, and had better not be let down on the floor in a basket, to play the blockhead. He is sure to commit himself in good company—and by dealing always in abstractions, and driving at generalities, to offend against the three proprieties of time, place, and person. Authors are angry, loud, and vehement in argument: the man of more refined breeding, who has been 'all tranquillity and smiles,' goes away, and

tries to ruin the antagonist, whom he could not vanquish in a dispute. The manners of a court and of polished life are by no means downright, straight-forward, but the contrary. They have something dramatic in them; each person plays an assumed part; the affected, overstrained politeness and suppression of real sentiment lead to concealed irony, and the spirit of satire and raillery; and hence we may account for the perfection of the genteel comedy of the century before the last, when poets were allowed to mingle in the court-circles, and took their cue from the splendid ring

Of mimic statesmen and their merry king.

The essence of this sort of conversation and intercourse, both on and off the stage, has some how since evaporated; the disguises of royalty, nobility, gentry have been in some measure seen through: we have become individually of little importance, compared with greater objects, in the eyes of our neighbours, and even in our own: abstract topics, not personal pretensions, are the order of the day; so that what remains of the character we have been talking of, is chiefly exotic and provincial, and may be seen still flourishing in country-places, in a wholesome state of vegetable decay!

A man may have the manners of a gentleman without having the look, and he may have the character of a gentleman, in a more abstracted point of view, without the manners. The feelings of a gentleman, in this higher sense, only denote a more refined humanity —a spirit delicate in itself, and unwilling to offend, either in the greatest or the smallest things. This may be coupled with absence of mind, with ignorance of forms, and frequent blunders. But the will is good. The spring of gentle offices and true regards is untainted. A person of this stamp blushes at an impropriety he was guilty of twenty years before, though he is, perhaps, liable to repeat it to-morrow. He never forgives himself for even a slip of the tongue, that implies an assumption of superiority over any one. In proportion to the concessions made to him, he lowers his demands. He gives the wall to a beggar:[1] but does not always bow to great men. This class of character have been called 'God Almighty's gentlemen.'

[1] The writer of this Essay once saw a Prince of the Blood pull off his hat to every one in the street, till he came to the beggarman that swept the crossing. This was a nice distinction. Farther, it was a distinction that the writer of this Essay would not make to be a Prince of the Blood. Perhaps, however, a question might be started in the manner of Montaigne, whether the beggar did not pull off his hat in quality of asking charity, and not as a mark of respect. Now a Prince may decline giving charity, though he is obliged to return a civility. If he does not, he may be treated with disrespect another time, and that is an alternative he is bound to prevent. Any other person might set up such a plea, but the person to whom a whole street had been bowing just before.



There are not a great many of them.—The *late* G—— D—— was one; for we understand that that gentleman was not able to survive some ill-disposed person's having asserted of him, that he had mistaken Lord Castlereagh for the author of Waverley!

ESSAY XX

ON READING OLD BOOKS

I HATE to read new books. There are twenty or thirty volumes that I have read over and over again, and these are the only ones that I have any desire ever to read at all. It was a long time before I could bring myself to sit down to the Tales of My Landlord, but now that author's works have made a considerable addition to my scanty library. I am told that some of Lady Morgan's are good, and have been recommended to look into Anastasius; but I have not yet ventured upon that task. A lady, the other day, could not refrain from expressing her surprise to a friend, who said he had been reading Delphine:—she asked,—If it had not been published some time back? Women judge of books as they do of fashions or complexions, which are admired only 'in their newest gloss.' That is not my way. I am not one of those who trouble the circulating libraries much, or pester the booksellers for mail-coach copies of standard periodical publications. I cannot say that I am greatly addicted to black-letter, but I profess myself well versed in the marble bindings of Andrew Millar, in the middle of the last century; nor does my taste revolt at Thurloe's State Papers, in Russia leather; or an ample impression of Sir William Temple's Essays, with a portrait after Sir Godfrey Kneller in front. I do not think altogether the worse of a book for having survived the author a generation or two. I have more confidence in the dead than the living. Contemporary writers may generally be divided into two classes—one's friends or one's foes. Of the first we are compelled to think too well, and of the last we are disposed to think too ill, to receive much genuine pleasure from the perusal, or to judge fairly of the merits of either. One candidate for literary fame, who happens to be of our acquaintance, writes finely, and like a man of genius; but unfortunately has a foolish face, which spoils a delicate passage:—another inspires us with the highest respect for his personal talents and character, but does not quite come up to our expectations in print. All these contradictions and petty details interrupt the calm current

of our reflections. If you want to know what any of the authors were who lived before our time, and are still objects of anxious inquiry, you have only to look into their works. But the dust and smoke and noise of modern literature have nothing in common with the pure, silent air of immortality.

When I take up a work that I have read before (the oftener the better) I know what I have to expect. The satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated. When the entertainment is altogether new, I sit down to it as I should to a strange dish,—turn and pick out a bit here and there, and am in doubt what to think of the composition. There is a want of confidence and security to second appetite. New-fangled books are also like made-dishes in this respect, that they are generally little else than hashes and *rifaccimentos* of what has been served up entire and in a more natural state at other times. Besides, in thus turning to a well-known author, there is not only an assurance that my time will not be thrown away, or my palate nauseated with the most insipid or vilest trash,—but I shake hands with, and look an old, tried, and valued friend in the face,—compare notes, and chat the hours away. It is true, we form dear friendships with such ideal guests—dearer, alas! and more lasting, than those with our most intimate acquaintance. In reading a book which is an old favourite with me (say the first novel I ever read) I not only have the pleasure of imagination and of a critical relish of the work, but the pleasures of memory added to it. It recals the same feelings and associations which I had in first reading it, and which I can never have again in any other way. Standard productions of this kind are links in the chain of our conscious being. They bind together the different scattered divisions of our personal identity. They are landmarks and guides in our journey through life. They are pegs and loops on which we can hang up, or from which we can take down, at pleasure, the wardrobe of a moral imagination, the relics of our best affections, the tokens and records of our happiest hours. They are 'for thoughts and for remembrance!' They are like Fortunatus's Wishing-Cap—they give us the best riches—those of Fancy; and transport us, not over half the globe, but (which is better) over half our lives, at a word's notice!

My father Shandy solaced himself with Bruscambille. Give me for this purpose a volume of Peregrine Pickle or Tom Jones. Open either of them any where—at the Memoirs of Lady Vane, or the adventures at the masquerade with Lady Bellaston, or the disputes between Thwackum and Square, or the escape of Molly Seagrim, or the incident of Sophia and her muff, or the edifying prolixity of her aunt's lecture—and there I find the same delightful, busy, bustling

some as ever, and feel myself the same as when I was first introduced into the midst of it. Nay, sometimes the sight of an odd volume of those good old English authors on the shelves of a library, answers the purpose, revives the whole train of ideas, and sets 'the puppets dallying.' Twenty years are struck off the list, and I am a child again. A sage philosopher, who was not a very wise man, said, that he should like very well to be young again, if he could take his experience along with him. This ingenious person did not seem to be aware, by the gravity of his remark, that the great advantage of being young is to be without this weight of experience, which he would fain place upon the shoulders of youth, and which never comes too late with years. Oh! what a privilege to be able to let this hump, like Christian's burthen, drop from off one's back, and transport one's self, by the help of a little musty duodecimo, to the time when 'ignorance was bliss,' and when we first got a peep at the raree-show of the world, through the glass of fiction—gazing at mankind, as we do at wild beasts in a menagerie, through the bars of their cages,—or at curiosities in a museum, that we must not touch! For myself, not only are the old ideas of the contents of the work brought back to my mind in all their vividness, but the old associations of the faces and persons of those I then knew, as they were in their life-time—the place where I sat to read the volume, the day when I got it, the feeling of the air, the fields, the sky—return, and fill my early impressions with them. This is better to me—those places, those times, those persons, and those feelings that come across me as I retrace the story and devour the page, are to me better far than the wet sheets of the last new novel from the Ballantyne press, to say nothing of the Minerva press in Leadenhall-street. It is like visiting the scenes of early youth. I think of the time 'when I was in my father's house, and my path ran down with butter and honey,' —when I was a little, thoughtless child, and had no other wish or care but to con my daily task, and be happy!—Tom Jones, I remember, was the first work that broke the spell. It came down in numbers once a fortnight, in Cooke's pocket-edition, embellished with cuts. I had hitherto read only in school-books, and a tiresome ecclesiastical history (with the exception of Mrs. Radcliffe's Romance of the Forest): but this had a different relish with it,—'sweet in the mouth,' though not 'bitter in the belly.' It smacked of the world I lived in, and in which I was to live—and shewed me groups, 'gay creatures' not 'of the element,' but of the earth; not 'living in the clouds,' but travelling the same road that I did;—some that had passed on before me, and others that might

soon overtake me. My heart had palpitated at the thoughts of a boarding-school ball, or gala-day at Midsummer or Christmas: but the world I had found out in Cooke's edition of the British Novelists was to me a dance through life, a perpetual gala-day. The six-penny numbers of this work regularly contrived to leave off just in the middle of a sentence, and in the nick of a story, where Tom Jones discovers Square behind the blanket; or where Parson Adams, in the inextricable confusion of events, very undesignedly gets to bed to Mrs. Slip-slop. Let me caution the reader against this impression of Joseph Andrews; for there is a picture of Fanny in it which he should not set his heart on, lest he should never meet with any thing like it; or if he should, it would, perhaps, be better for him that he had not. It was just like —— ——! With what eagerness I used to look forward to the next number, and open the prints! Ah! never again shall I feel the enthusiastic delight with which I gazed at the figures, and anticipated the story and adventures of Major Bath and Commodore Trunnion, of Trim and my Uncle Toby, of Don Quixote and Sancho and Dapple, of Gil Blas and Dame Lorenza Sephora, of Laura and the fair Lucretia, whose lips open and shut like buds of roses. To what nameless ideas did they give rise,—with what airy delights I filled up the outlines, as I hung in silence over the page!—Let me still recal them, that they may breathe fresh life into me, and that I may live that birthday of thought and romantic pleasure over again! Talk of the *ideal*! This is the only true ideal—the heavenly tints of Fancy reflected in the bubbles that float upon the spring-tide of human life.

> Oh! Memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,
> And give those scenes thine everlasting life!

The paradox with which I set out is, I hope, less startling than it was; the reader will, by this time, have been let into my secret. Much about the same time, or I believe rather earlier, I took a particular satisfaction in reading Chubb's Tracts, and I often think I will get them again to wade through. There is a high gusto of polemical divinity in them; and you fancy that you hear a club of shoemakers at Salisbury, debating a disputable text from one of St. Paul's Epistles in a workmanlike style, with equal shrewdness and pertinacity. I cannot say much for my metaphysical studies, into which I launched shortly after with great ardour, so as to make a toil of a pleasure. I was presently entangled in the briars and thorns of subtle distinctions,—of 'fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute,' though I cannot add that 'in their wandering mazes I found no end;' for I did arrive at some very satisfactory and

potent conclusions; nor will I go so far, however ungrateful the subject might seem, as to exclaim with Marlowe's Faustus—'Would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book'—that is, never studied such authors as Hartley, Hume, Berkeley, &c. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding is, however, a work from which I never derived either pleasure or profit; and Hobbes, dry and powerful as he is, I did not read till long afterwards. I read a few poets, which did not much hit my taste,—for I would have the reader understand, I am deficient in the faculty of imagination; but I fell early upon French romances and philosophy, and devoured them tooth-and-nail. Many a dainty repast have I made of the New Eloise;—the description of the kiss; the excursion on the water; the letter of St. Preux, recalling the time of their first loves; and the account of Julia's death; these I read over and over again with unspeakable delight and wonder. Some years after, when I met with this work again, I found I had lost nearly my whole relish for it (except some few parts) and was, I remember, very much mortified with the change in my taste, which I sought to attribute to the smallness and gilt edges of the edition I had bought, and its being perfumed with rose-leaves. Nothing could exceed the gravity, the solemnity with which I carried home and read the Dedication to the Social Contract, with some other pieces of the same author, which I had picked up at a stall in a coarse leathern cover. Of the Confessions I have spoken elsewhere, and may repeat what I have said—'Sweet is the dew of their memory, and pleasant the balm of their recollection!' Their beauties are not 'scattered like stray-gifts o'er the earth,' but sown thick on the page, rich and rare. I wish I had never read the Emilius, or read it with less implicit faith. I had no occasion to pamper my natural aversion to affectation or pretence, by romantic and artificial means. I had better have formed myself on the model of Sir Fopling Flutter. There is a class of persons whose virtues and most shining qualities sink in, and are concealed by, an absorbent ground of modesty and reserve; and such a one I do, without vanity, profess myself.[1] Now these are the very persons who are likely to attach themselves to the character of Emilius, and of whom it is sure to be the bane. This dull, phlegmatic, retiring humour is not in a fair way to be corrected, but confirmed and rendered desperate, by being in that work held up as an object of imitation, as an example of simplicity and magnanimity—by coming

[1] Nearly the same sentiment was wittily and happily expressed by a friend, who had some lottery puffs, which he had been employed to write, returned on his hands for their too great severity of thought and classical terseness of style, and who observed on that occasion, that 'Modest merit never can succeed!'

upon us with all the recommendations of novelty, surprise, and superiority to the prejudices of the world—by being stuck upon a pedestal, made amiable, dazzling, a *leurre de dupe*! The reliance on solid worth which it inculcates, the preference of sober truth to gaudy tinsel, hangs like a mill-stone round the neck of the imagination—'a load to sink a navy'—impedes our progress, and blocks up every prospect in life. A man, to get on, to be successful, conspicuous, applauded, should not retire upon the centre of his conscious resources, but be always at the circumference of appearances. He must envelop himself in a halo of mystery—he must ride in an equipage of opinion—he must walk with a train of self-conceit following him—he must not strip himself to a buff-jerkin, to the doublet and hose of his real merits, but must surround himself with a *cortege* of prejudices, like the signs of the Zodiac—he must seem any thing but what he is, and then he may pass for any thing he pleases. The world love to be amused by hollow professions, to be deceived by flattering appearances, to live in a state of hallucination; and can forgive every thing but the plain, downright, simple honest truth—such as we see it chalked out in the character of Emilius.—To return from this digression, which is a little out of place here.

Books have in a great measure lost their power over me; nor can I revive the same interest in them as formerly. I perceive when a thing is good, rather than feel it. It is true,

Marcian Colonna is a dainty book;

and the reading of Mr. Keats's Eve of Saint Agnes lately made me regret that I was not young again. The beautiful and tender images there conjured up, 'come like shadows—so depart.' The 'tiger-moth's wings,' which he has spread over his rich poetic blazonry, just flit across my fancy; the gorgeous twilight window which he has painted over again in his verse, to me 'blushes' almost in vain 'with blood of queens and kings.' I know how I should have felt at one time in reading such passages; and that is all. The sharp luscious flavour, the fine *aroma* is fled, and nothing but the stalk, the bran, the husk of literature is left. If any one were to ask me what I read now, I might answer with my Lord Hamlet in the play—'Words, words, words.'—'What is the matter?'—*Nothing*!'—They have scarce a meaning. But it was not always so. There was a time when to my thinking, every word was a flower or a pearl, like those which dropped from the mouth of the little peasant-girl in the Fairy tale, or like those that fall from the great preacher in the Caledonian Chapel! I drank of the stream of knowledge

that tempted, but did not mock my lips, as of the river of life, freely. How eagerly I slaked my thirst of German sentiment, 'as the hart that panteth for the water-springs;' how I bathed and revelled, and added my floods of tears to Goëthe's Sorrows of Werter, and to Schiller's Robbers—

> Giving my stock of more to that which had too much!

I read, and assented with all my soul to Coleridge's fine Sonnet, beginning—

> Schiller! that hour I would have wish'd to die,
> If through the shuddering midnight I had sent,
> From the dark dungeon of the tow'r time-rent,
> That fearful voice, a famish'd father's cry!

I believe I may date my insight into the mysteries of poetry from the commencement of my acquaintance with the authors of the Lyrical Ballads; at least, my discrimination of the higher sorts—not my predilection for such writers as Goldsmith or Pope: nor do I imagine they will say I got my liking for the Novelists, or the comic writers,—for the characters of Valentine, Tattle, or Miss Prue, from them. If so, I must have got from them what they never had themselves. In points where poetic diction and conception are concerned, I may be at a loss, and liable to be imposed upon: but in forming an estimate of passages relating to common life and manners, I cannot think I am a plagiarist from any man. I there 'know my cue without a prompter.' I may say of such studies—*Intus et in cute*. I am just able to admire those literal touches of observation and description, which persons of loftier pretensions over-look and despise. I think I comprehend something of the characteristic part of Shakspeare; and in him indeed, all is characteristic, even the nonsense and poetry. I believe it was the celebrated Sir Humphrey Davy who used to say, that Shakspeare was rather a metaphysician than a poet. At any rate, it was not ill said. I wish that I had sooner known the dramatic writers contemporary with Shakspeare; for in looking them over about a year ago, I almost revived my old passion for reading, and my old delight in books, though they were very nearly new to me. The Periodical Essayists I read long ago. The Spectator I liked extremely: but the Tatler took my fancy most. I read the others soon after, the Rambler, the Adventurer, the World, the Connoisseur: I was not sorry to get to the end of them, and have no desire to go regularly through them again. I consider myself a thorough adept in Richardson. I like the longest of his novels best, and think no part

of them tedious; nor should I ask to have any thing better to do than to read them from beginning to end, to take them up when I chose, and lay them down when I was tired, in some old family mansion in the country, till every word and syllable relating to the bright Clarissa, the divine Clementina, the beautiful Pamela, 'with every trick and line of their sweet favour,' were once more 'graven in my heart's table.'[1] I have a sneaking kindness for Mackenzie's Julia de Roubignè—for the deserted mansion, and straggling gilliflowers on the mouldering garden-wall; and still more for his Man of Feeling; not that it is better, nor so good; but at the time I read it, I sometimes thought of the heroine, Miss Walton, and of Miss —— together, and 'that ligament, fine as it was, was never broken!'—One of the poets that I have always read with most pleasure, and can wander about in for ever with a sort of voluptuous indolence, is Spenser; and I like Chaucer even better. The only writer among the Italians I can pretend to any knowledge of, is Boccacio, and of him I cannot express half my admiration. His story of the Hawk I could read and think of from day to day, just as I would look at a picture of Titian's!—

I remember, as long ago as the year 1798, going to a neighbouring town (Shrewsbury, where Farquhar has laid the plot of his Recruiting Officer) and bringing home with me, 'at one proud swoop,' a copy of Milton's Paradise Lost, and another of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution—both which I have still; and I still recollect, when I see the covers, the pleasure with which I dipped into them as I returned with my double prize. I was set up for one while. That time is past 'with all its giddy raptures:' but I am still anxious to preserve its memory, 'embalmed with odours.'—With respect to the first of these works, I would be permitted to remark here in passing, that it is a sufficient answer to the German criticism which has since been started against the character of Satan (*viz.* that it is not one of disgusting deformity, or pure, defecated malice) to say that Milton has there drawn, not the abstract principle of evil, not a devil incarnate, but a fallen angel. This is the scriptural account, and the poet has followed it. We may safely retain such passages as that well-known one—

> ——His form had not yet lost
> All her original brightness; nor appear'd
> Less than archangel ruin'd; and the excess
> Of glory obscur'd——

[1] During the peace of Amiens, a young English officer, of the name of Lovelace, was presented at Buonaparte's levee. Instead of the usual question, 'Where

for the theory, which is opposed to them, 'falls flat upon the grunsel edge, and shames its worshippers.' Let us hear no more then of this monkish cant, and bigotted outcry for the restoration of the horns and tail of the devil!—Again, as to the other work, Burke's Reflections, I took a particular pride and pleasure in it, and read it to myself and others for months afterwards. I had reason for my prejudice in favour of this author. To understand an adversary is some praise: to admire him is more. I thought I did both: I knew I did one. From the first time I ever cast my eyes on any thing of Burke's (which was an extract from his Letter to a Noble Lord in a three-times a week paper, The St. James's Chronicle, in 1796), I said to myself, 'This is true eloquence: this is a man pouring out his mind on paper.' All other style seemed to me pedantic and impertinent. Dr. Johnson's was walking on stilts; and even Junius's (who was at that time a favourite with me) with all his terseness, shrunk up into little antithetic points and well-trimmed sentences. But Burke's style was forked and playful as the lightning, crested like the serpent. He delivered plain things on a plain ground; but when he rose, there was no end of his flights and circumgyrations—and in this very Letter, 'he, like an eagle in a dove-cot, fluttered *his* Volscians' (the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale)[1] 'in Corioli.' I did not care for his doctrines. I was then, and am still, proof against their contagion; but I admired the author, and was considered as not a very staunch partisan of the opposite side, though I thought myself that an abstract proposition was one thing—a masterly transition, a brilliant metaphor, another. I conceived too that he might be wrong in his main argument, and yet deliver fifty truths in arriving at a false conclusion. I remember Coleridge assuring me, as a poetical and political set-off to my sceptical admiration, that Wordsworth had written an Essay on Marriage, which, for manly thought and nervous expression, he deemed incomparably superior. As I had not, at that time, seen any specimens of Mr. Wordsworth's prose style, I could not express my doubts on the subject. If there are greater prose-writers than Burke, they either lie out of my course of study, or are beyond my sphere of comprehension. I am too old to be a convert to a new

have you served, Sir?' the First Consul immediately addressed him, 'I perceive your name, Sir, is the same as that of the hero of Richardson's Romance!' Here was a Consul. The young man's uncle, who was called Lovelace, told me this anecdote while we were stopping together at Calais. I had also been thinking that his was the same name as that of the hero of Richardson's Romance. This is one of my reasons for liking Buonaparte.

[1] He is there called 'Citizen Lauderdale.' Is this the present Earl?

mythology of genius. The niches are occupied, the tables are full. If such is still my admiration of this man's misapplied powers, what must it have been at a time when I myself was in vain trying, year after year, to write a single Essay, nay, a single page or sentence; when I regarded the wonders of his pen with the longing eyes of one who was dumb and a changeling; and when, to be able to convey the slightest conception of my meaning to others in words, was the height of an almost hopeless ambition! But I never measured others' excellences by my own defects: though a sense of my own incapacity, and of the steep, impassable ascent from me to them, made me regard them with greater awe and fondness. I have thus run through most of my early studies and favourite authors, some of whom I have since criticised more at large. Whether those observations will survive me, I neither know nor do I much care: but to the works themselves, 'worthy of all acceptation,' and to the feelings they have always excited in me since I could distinguish a meaning in language, nothing shall ever prevent me from looking back with gratitude and triumph. To have lived in the cultivation of an intimacy with such works, and to have familiarly relished such names, is not to have lived quite in vain.

There are other authors whom I have never read, and yet whom I have frequently had a great desire to read, from some circumstance relating to them. Among these is Lord Clarendon's History of the Grand Rebellion, after which I have a hankering, from hearing it spoken of by good judges—from my interest in the events, and knowledge of the characters from other sources, and from having seen fine portraits of most of them. I like to read a well-penned character, and Clarendon is said to have been a master in this way. I should like to read Froissart's Chronicles, Hollingshed and Stowe, and Fuller's Worthies. I intend, whenever I can, to read Beaumont and Fletcher all through. There are fifty-two of their plays, and I have only read a dozen or fourteen of them. A Wife for a Month, and Thierry and Theodoret, are, I am told, delicious, and I can believe it. I should like to read the speeches in Thucydides, and Guicciardini's History of Florence, and Don Quixote in the original. I have often thought of reading the Loves of Persiles and Sigismunda, and the Galatea of the same author. But I somehow reserve them like 'another Yarrow.' I should also like to read the last new novel (if I could be sure it was so) of the author of Waverley:—no one would be more glad than I to find it the best!—

THE PLAIN SPEAKER

ESSAY XXI

ON PERSONAL CHARACTER

'Men palliate and conceal their original qualities, but do not extirpate them.'
MONTAIGNE'S *Essays.*

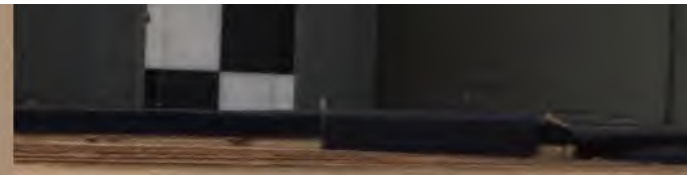
No one ever changes his character from the time he is two years old; nay, I might say, from the time he is two hours old. We may, with instruction and opportunity, mend our manners, or else alter for the worse,—'as the flesh and fortune shall serve;' but the character, the internal, original bias, remains always the same, true to itself to the very last—

'And feels the ruling passion strong in death!'

A very grave and dispassionate philosopher (the late celebrated chemist, Mr. Nicholson) was so impressed with the conviction of the instantaneous commencement and development of the character with the birth, that he published a long and amusing article in the Monthly Magazine, giving a detailed account of the progress, history, education, and tempers of two twins, up to the period of their being *eleven days old.* This is, perhaps, considering the matter too curiously, and would amount to a species of horoscopy, if we were to build on such premature indications; but the germ no doubt is there, though we must wait a little longer to see what form it takes. We need not in general wait long. The Devil soon betrays the cloven foot; or a milder and better spirit appears in its stead. A temper sullen or active, shy or bold, grave or lively, selfish or romantic, (to say nothing of quickness or dulness of apprehension) is manifest very early; and imperceptibly, but irresistibly moulds our inclinations, habits, and pursuits through life. The greater or less degree of animal spirits,—of nervous irritability,—the complexion of the blood,—the proportion of 'hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce that strive for mastery,'—the Saturnine or the Mercurial,—the disposition to be affected by objects near, or at a distance, or not at all,—to be struck with novelty, or to brood over deep-rooted impressions,—to indulge in laughter or in tears, the leaven of passion or of prudence that tempers this frail clay, is born with us, and never quits us. 'It is not in our stars,' in planetary influence, but neither is it owing 'to ourselves, that we are thus or thus.' The accession of knowledge, the pressure of circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, does little more than minister occasion to the first predisposing bias—than assist, like the dews of heaven, or retard,

like the nipping north, the growth of the seed originally sown in our constitution—than give a more or less decided expression to that personal character, the outlines of which nothing can alter. What I mean is, that Blifil and Tom Jones, for instance, by changing places, would never have changed characters. The one might, from circumstances, and from the notions instilled into him, have become a little less selfish, and the other a little less extravagant; but with a trifling allowance of this sort, taking the proposition *cum grano salis*, they would have been just where they set out. Blifil would have been Blifil still, and Jones what nature intended him to be. I have made use of this example without any apology for its being a fictitious one, because I think good novels are the most authentic as well as most accessible repositories of the natural history and philosophy of the species.

I shall not borrow assistance or illustration from the organic system of Doctors Gall and Spurzheim, which reduces this question to a small compass and very distinct limits, because I do not understand or believe in it: but I think those who put faith in physiognomy at all, or imagine that the mind is stamped upon the countenance, must believe that there is such a thing as an essential difference of character in different individuals. We do not change our features with our situations; neither do we change the capacities or inclinations which lurk beneath them. A flat face does not become an oval one, nor a pug nose a Roman one, with the acquisition of an office, or the addition of a title. So neither is the pert, hard, unfeeling outline of character turned from selfishness and cunning to openness and generosity, by any softening of circumstances. If the face puts on an habitual smile in the sunshine of fortune, or if it suddenly lowers in the storms of adversity, do not trust too implicitly to appearances; the man is the same at bottom. The designing knave may sometimes wear a vizor, or, 'to beguile the time, look like the time;' but watch him narrowly, and you will detect him behind his mask! We recognise, after a length of years, the same well-known face that we were formerly acquainted with, changed by time, but the same in itself; and can trace the features of the boy in the full-grown man. Can we doubt that the character and thoughts have remained as much the same all that time; have borne the same image and superscription; have grown with the growth, and strengthened with the strength? In this sense, and in Mr. Wordsworth's phrase, 'the child 's the father of the man' surely enough. The same tendencies may not always be equally visible, but they are still in existence, and break out, whenever they dare and can, the more for being checked. Again, we often distinctly notice the same features, the same bodily peculiarities, the same look and gestures, in different persons of the



same family; and find this resemblance extending to collateral branches and through several generations, showing how strongly nature must have been warped and biassed in that particular direction at first. This pre-determination in the blood has its caprices too, and wayward as well as obstinate fits. The family-likeness sometimes skips over the next of kin or the nearest branch, and re-appears in all its singularity in a second or third cousin, or passes over the son to the grand-child. Where the pictures of the heirs and successors to a title or estate have been preserved for any length of time in Gothic halls and old-fashioned mansions, the prevailing outline and character does not wear out, but may be traced through its numerous inflections and descents, like the winding of a river through an expanse of country, for centuries. The ancestor of many a noble house has sat for the portraits of his youthful descendants; and still the soul of 'Fairfax and the starry Vere,' consecrated in Marvel's verse, may be seen mantling in the suffused features of some young court-beauty of the present day. The portrait of Judge Jeffries, which was exhibited lately in the Gallery in Pall Mall—young, handsome, spirited, good-humoured, and totally unlike, at first view, what you would expect from the character, was an exact likeness of two young men whom I knew some years ago, the living representatives of that family. It is curious that, consistently enough with the delineation in the portrait, old Evelyn should have recorded in his Memoirs, that 'he saw the Chief-Justice Jeffries in a large company the night before, and that he thought he laughed, drank, and danced too much for a man who had that day condemned Algernon Sidney to the block.' It is not always possible to foresee the tyger's spring, till we are in his grasp; the fawning, cruel eye dooms its prey, while it glitters! Features alone do not run in the blood; vices and virtues, genius and folly are transmitted through the same sure, but unseen channel. There is an involuntary, unaccountable family character, as well as family face; and we see it manifesting itself in the same way, with unbroken continuity, or by fits and starts. There shall be a regular breed of misers, of incorrigible old *hunkses* in a family, time out of mind; or the shame of the thing, and the hardships and restraint imposed upon him while young, shall urge some desperate spendthrift to wipe out the reproach upon his name by a course of extravagance and debauchery; and his immediate successors shall make his example an excuse for relapsing into the old jog-trot incurable infirmity, the grasping and pinching disease of the family again.[1] A person may be indebted for a nose

[1] 'I know at this time a person of vast estate, who is the immediate descendant of a fine gentleman, but the great-grandson of a broker, in whom his ancestor is now

or an eye, for a graceful carriage or a voluble discourse, to a great-aunt or uncle, whose existence he has scarcely heard of; and distant relations are surprised, on some casual introduction, to find each other an *alter idem*. Country cousins, who meet after they are grown up for the first time in London, often start at the likeness,—it is like looking at themselves in the glass—nay, they shall see, almost before they exchange a word, their own thoughts (as it were) staring them in the face, the same ideas, feelings, opinions, passions, prejudices, likings and antipathies; the same turn of mind and sentiment, the same foibles, peculiarities, faults, follies, misfortunes, consolations, the same self, the same every thing! And farther, this coincidence shall take place and be most remarkable, where not only no intercourse has previously been kept up, not even by letter or by common friends, but where the different branches of a family have been estranged for long years, and where the younger part in each have been brought up in totally different situations, with different studies, pursuits, expectations and opportunities. To assure me that this is owing to circumstances, is to assure me of a gratuitous absurdity, which you cannot know, and which I shall not believe. It is owing, not to circumstances, but to the force of kind, to the stuff of which our blood and humours are compounded being the same. Why should I and an old hair-brained uncle of mine fasten upon the same picture in a Collection, and talk of it for years after, though one of no particular 'mark or likelihood' in itself, but for something congenial in the look to our own humour and way of seeing nature? Why should my cousin L—— and I fix upon the same book, Tristram Shandy,—without comparing notes, have it 'doubled down and dog-eared' in the same places, and live upon it as a sort of food that assimilated with our natural dispositions?—'Instinct, Hal, instinct!' They are fools who say otherwise, and have never studied nature or mankind, but in books and systems of philosophy. But, indeed, the colour of our lives is woven into the fatal thread at our births: our original sins, and our redeeming graces are infused into us; nor is the bond, that confirms our destiny, ever cancelled.

> Beneath the hills, amid the flowery groves,
> The generations are prepar'd; the pangs,
> The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
> Of poor humanity's afflicted will
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.

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revived. He is a very honest gentleman in his principles, but cannot for his blood talk fairly: he is heartily sorry for it; but he cheats by constitution, and over-reaches by instinct.'—See this subject delightfully treated in the 75th Number of the Tatler, in an account of Mr. Bickerstaff's pedigree, on occasion of his sister's marriage.

The 'winged wounds' that rankle in our breasts to our latest day, were planted there long since, ticketed and labelled on the outside in small but indelible characters, written in our blood, 'like that ensanguined flower inscribed with woe:' we are in the toils from the very first, hemmed in by the hunters; and these are our own passions, bred of our brain and humours, and that never leave us, but consume and gnaw the heart in our short life-time, as worms wait for us in the grave!

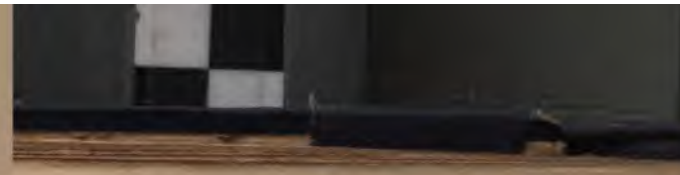
Critics and authors, who congregate in large cities, and see nothing of the world but a sort of phantasmagoria, to whom the numberless characters they meet in the course of a few hours are fugitive 'as the flies of a summer,' evanescent as the figures in a *camera obscura*, may talk very learnedly, and attribute the motions of the puppets to circumstances of which they are confessedly in total ignorance. They see character only in the bust, and have not room (for the crowd) to study it as a whole-length, that is, as it exists in reality. But those who trace things to their source, and proceed from individuals to generals, know better. School-boys, for example, who are early let into the secret, and see the seeds growing, are not only sound judges, but true prophets of character; so that the nick-names they give their play-fellows usually stick by them ever after. The gossips in country-towns, also, who study human nature, not merely in the history of the individual, but in the genealogy of the race, know the comparative anatomy of the minds of a whole neighbourhood to a tittle, where to look for marks and defects,—explain a vulgarity by a cross in the breed, or a foppish air in a young tradesman by his grandmother's marriage with a dancing-master, and are the only practical conjurors and expert decypherers of the determinate lines of true or supposititious character.

The character of women (I should think it will at this time of day be granted) differs essentially from that of men, not less so than their shape or the texture of their skin. It has been said indeed, 'Most women have no character at all,'—and on the other hand, the fair and eloquent authoress of the Rights of Women was for establishing the masculine pretensions and privileges of her sex on a perfect equality with ours. I shall leave Pope and Mary Wolstonecraft to settle that point between them. I should laugh at any one who told me that the European, the Asiatic, and the African character were the same. I no more believe it than I do that black is the same colour as white, or that a straight line is a crooked one. We see in whole nations and large classes the physiognomies, and I should suppose ('not to speak it profanely') the general characters of different animals with which we are acquainted, as of the fox, the wolf, the hog, the goat, the dog, the monkey; and I suspect this

analogy, whether perceived or not, has as prevailing an influence on their habits and actions, as any theory of moral sentiments taught in the schools. Rules and precautions may, no doubt, be applied to counteract the excesses and overt demonstrations of any such characteristic infirmity; but still the disease will be in the mind, an impediment, not a help to virtue. An exception is usually taken to all national or general reflections, as unjust and illiberal, because they cannot be true of every individual. It is not meant that they are; and besides, the same captious objection is not made to the handsome things that are said of whole bodies and classes of men. A lofty panegyric, a boasted virtue will fit the inhabitants of an entire district to a hair; the want of strict universality, of philosophical and abstract truth, is no difficulty here; but if you hint at an obvious vice or defect, this is instantly construed into a most unfair and partial view of the case, and each defaulter throws the imputation from himself and his country with scorn. Thus you may praise the generosity of the English, the prudence of the Scotch, the hospitality of the Irish, as long as you please, and not a syllable is whispered against these sweeping expressions of admiration; but reverse the picture, hold up to censure, or only glance at the unfavourable side of each character (and they themselves admit that they have a distinguishing and generic character as a people), and you are assailed by the most violent clamours, and a confused Babel of noises, as a disseminator of unfounded prejudices, or a libeller of human nature. I am sure there is nothing reasonable in this.—Harsh and disagreeable qualities wear out in nations, as in individuals, from time and intercourse with the world; but it is at the expense of their intrinsic excellences. The vices of softness and effeminacy sink deeper with age, like thorns in the flesh. Single acts or events often determine the fate of mortals, yet may have nothing to do with their general deserts or failings. He who is said to be cured of any glaring infirmity may be suspected never to have had it; and lastly, it may be laid down as a general rule, that mankind improve, by means of luxury and civilisation, in social manners, and become more depraved in what relates to personal habits and character. There are few nations, as well as few men (with the exception of tyrants) that are cruel and voluptuous, immersed in pleasure, and bent on inflicting pain on others, at the same time. Ferociousness is the characteristic of barbarous ages, licentiousness of more refined periods.[1]

[1] Fideliter didicisse ingenuas artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

The same maxim does not establish the purity of morals that infers their mildness.



I shall not undertake to decide exactly how far the original character may be modified by the general progress of society, or by particular circumstances happening to the individual; but I think the alteration (be it what it may) is more apparent than real, more in conduct than in feeling. I will not deny, that an extreme and violent difference of circumstances (as that between the savage and civilized state) will supersede the common distinctions of character, and prevent certain dispositions and sentiments from ever developing themselves. Yet with reference to this, I would observe, in the first place, that in the most opposite ranks and conditions of life, we find qualities shewing themselves, which we should have least expected,—grace in a cottage, humanity in a bandit, sincerity in courts; and secondly, in ordinary cases, and in the mixed mass of human affairs, the mind contrives to lay hold of those circumstances and motives which suit its own bias and confirm its natural disposition, whatever it may be, gentle or rough, vulgar or refined, spirited or cowardly, open-hearted or cunning. The will is not blindly impelled by outward accidents, but selects the impressions by which it chooses to be governed, with great dexterity and perseverance. Or the machine may be at the disposal of fortune: the man is still his own master. The soul, under the pressure of circumstances, does not lose its original spring, but, as soon as the pressure is removed, recoils with double violence to its first position. That which any one has been long learning unwillingly, he unlearns with proportionable eagerness and haste. Kings have been said to be incorrigible to experience. The maxim might be extended, without injury, to the benefit of their subjects; for every man is a king (with all the pride and obstinacy of one) in his own little world. It is only lucky that the rest of the species are not answerable for his caprices! We laugh at the warnings and advice of others; we resent the lessons of adversity, and lose no time in letting it appear that we have escaped from its importunate hold. I do not think, with every assistance from reason and circumstances, that the slothful ever becomes active, the coward brave, the headstrong prudent, the fickle steady, the mean generous, the coarse delicate, the ill-tempered amiable, or the knave honest; but that the restraint of necessity and appearances once taken away, they would relapse into their former and real character again:—*Cucullus non facit monachum*. Manners, situation, example, fashion, have a prodigious influence on exterior deportment. But do they penetrate much deeper? The thief will not steal by day; but his having this command over himself does not do away his character or calling. The priest cannot indulge in certain irregularities; but unless his pulse beats temperately from the first, he will only be playing a part through

life. Again, the soldier cannot shrink from his duty in a dastardly manner; but if he has not naturally steady nerves and strong resolution,—except in the field of battle, he may be fearful as a woman, though covered with scars and honour. The judge must be disinterested and above suspicion; yet should he have from nature an itching palm, an eye servile and greedy of office, he will somehow contrive to indemnify his private conscience out of his public principle, and husband a reputation for legal integrity, as a stake to play the game of political profligacy with more advantage! There is often a contradiction in character, which is composed of various and unequal parts; and hence there will arise an appearance of fickleness and inconsistency. A man may be sluggish by the father's side, and of a restless and uneasy temper by the mother's; and he may favour either of these inherent dispositions according to circumstances. But he will not have changed his character, any more than a man who sometimes lives in one apartment of a house and then takes possession of another, according to whim or convenience, changes his habitation. The simply phlegmatic never turns to the truly 'fiery quality.' So, the really gay or trifling never become thoughtful and serious. The light-hearted wretch takes nothing to heart. He, on whom (from natural carelessness of disposition) 'the shot of accident and dart of chance' fall like drops of oil on water, so that he brushes them aside with heedless hand and smiling face, will never be roused from his volatile indifference to meet inevitable calamities. He may try to laugh them off, but will not put himself to any inconvenience to prevent them. I know a man that, if a tiger were to jump into his room, would only play off some joke, some 'quip, or crank, or wanton wile' upon him. Mortifications and disappointments may break such a person's heart; but they will be the death of him ere they will make him provident of the future, or willing to forego one idle gratification of the passing moment for any consideration whatever. The dilatory man never becomes punctual. Resolution is of no avail; for the very essence of the character consists in this, that the present impression is of more efficacy than any previous resolution. I have heard it said of a celebrated writer, that if he had to get a reprieve from the gallows for himself or a friend (with leave be it spoken), and was to be at a certain place at a given time for this purpose, he would be a quarter of an hour behind-hand. What is to be done in this case? Can you talk or argue a man out of his humour? You might as well attempt to talk or argue him out of a lethargy, or a fever. The disease is in the blood: you may see it (if you are a curious observer) meandering in his veins, and reposing on his eye-lids! Some of our foibles are

laid in the constitution of our bodies; others in the structure of our minds, and both are irremediable. The vain man, who is full of himself, is never cured of his vanity, but looks for admiration to the last, with a restless, suppliant eye, in the midst of contumely and contempt; the modest man never grows vain from flattery, or unexpected applause, for he sees himself in the diminished scale of other things. He will not 'have his nothings monstered.' He knows how much he himself wants, how much others have; and till you can alter this conviction in him, or make him drunk by infusing some new poison, some celestial *ichor* into his veins, you cannot make a coxcomb of him. He is too well aware of the truth of what has been said, that 'the wisest amongst us is a fool in some things, as the lowest amongst men has some just notions, and therein is as wise as Socrates; so that every man resembles a statue made to stand against a wall, or in a niche; on one side it is a Plato, an Apollo, a Demosthenes; on the other, it is a rough, unformed piece of stone.'[1] Some persons of my acquaintance, who think themselves *teres et rotundus*, and armed at all points with perfections, would not be much inclined to give in to this sentiment, the modesty of which is only equalled by its sense and ingenuity. The man of sanguine temperament is seldom weaned from his castles in the air; nor can you, by virtue of any theory, convert the cold, careful calculator into a wild enthusiast. A self-tormentor is never satisfied, come what will. He always apprehends the worst, and is indefatigable in conjuring up the apparition of danger. He is uneasy at his own good fortune, as it takes from him his favourite topic of repining and complaint. Let him succeed to his heart's content in all that is reasonable or important, yet if there is any one thing (and *that* he is sure to find out) in which he does not get on, this embitters all the rest. I know an instance. Perhaps it is myself. Again, a surly man, in spite of warning, neglects his own interest, and will do so, because he has more pleasure in disobliging you than in serving himself. 'A friendly man will shew himself friendly,' to the last; for those who are said to have been spoiled by prosperity were never really good for any thing. A good-natured man never loses his native happiness of disposition: good temper is an estate for life; and a man born with common sense rarely turns out a very egregious fool. It is more common to see a fool become wise, that is, set up for wisdom, and be taken at his word by fools. We frequently judge of a man's intellectual pretensions by the number of books he writes; of his eloquence by the number of speeches he makes; of his capacity for business, by the number of offices he

[1] Richardson's Works, On the Science of a Connoisseur, p. 212.

holds. These are not true tests. Many a celebrated author is a known blockhead (between friends); and many a minister of state, whose gravity and self-importance pass with the world for depth of thought and weight of public care, is a laughing-stock to his very servants and dependants.[1] The talents of some men, indeed, which might not otherwise have had a field to display themselves, are called out by extraordinary situations, and rise with the occasion; but for all the routine and mechanical preparation, the pomp and parade and big looks of great statesmen, or what is called merely *filling office*, a very shallow capacity, with a certain immoveableness of countenance, is, I should suppose, sufficient, from what I have seen. Such political machines are not so good as the Mock-Duke in the Honey-Moon. As to genius and capacity for the works of art and science, all that a man really excels in, is his own and incommunicable; what he borrows from others he has in an inferior degree, and it is never what his fame rests on. Sir Joshua observes, that Raphael, in his latter pictures, shewed that he had learnt in some measure the colouring of Titian. If he had learnt it quite, the merit would still have been Titian's; but he did not learn it, and never would. But his expression (his glory and his excellence) was what he had within himself, first and last; and this it was that seated him on the pinnacle of fame, a pre-eminence that no artist, without an equal warrant from nature and genius, will ever deprive him of. With respect to indications of early genius for particular things, I will just mention, that I myself know an instance of a little boy, who could catch the hardest tunes, when between two and three years old, without any assistance but hearing them played on a hand-organ in the street; and who followed the exquisite pieces of Mozart, played to him for the first time, so as to fall in like an echo at the close. Was this accident, or education, or natural aptitude? I think the last. All the presumptions are for it, and there are none against it.

In fine, do we not see how hard certain early impressions, or prejudices acquired later, are to overcome? Do we not say, habit is a second nature? And shall we not allow the force of nature itself?

[1] The reputation is not the man. Yet all true reputation begins and ends in the opinion of a man's intimate friends. He *is* what they think him, and in the last result will be thought so by others. Where there is no solid merit to bear the pressure of personal contact, fame is but a vapour raised by accident or prejudice, and will soon vanish like a vapour or a noisome stench. But he who appears to those about him what he would have the world think him, from whom every one that approaches him in whatever circumstances brings something away to confirm the loud rumour of the popular voice, is alone great in spite of fortune. The malice of friendship, the littleness of curiosity, is as severe a test as the impartiality and enlarged views of history.

If the real disposition is concealed for a time and tampered with, how readily it breaks out with the first excuse or opportunity! How soon does the drunkard forget his resolution and constrained sobriety, at sight of the foaming tankard and blazing hearth! Does not the passion for gaming, in which there had been an involuntary pause, return like a madness all at once? It would be needless to offer instances of so obvious a truth. But if this superinduced nature is not to be got the better of by reason or prudence, who shall pretend to set aside the original one by prescription and management? Thus, if we turn to the characters of women, we find that the shrew, the jilt, the coquette, the wanton, the intriguer, the liar, continue all their lives the same. Meet them after the lapse of a quarter or half a century, and they are still infallibly at their old work. No rebuke from experience, no lessons of misfortune, make the least impression on them. On they go; and, in fact, they can go on in no other way. They try other things, but it will not do. They are like fish out of water, except in the element of their favourite vices. They might as well not be, as cease to be what they are by nature and custom. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' Neither do these wretched persons find any satisfaction or consciousness of their power, but in being a plague and a torment to themselves and every one else as long as they can. A good sort of woman is a character more rare than any of these, but it is equally durable. Look at the head of Hogarth's Idle Apprentice in the boat, holding up his fingers as horns at Cuckold's Point, and ask what penitentiary, what prison-discipline, would change the form of his forehead, 'villainous low,' or the conceptions lurking within it? Nothing:—no mother's fearful warnings,—nor the formidable precautions of that wiser and more loving mother, his country! That fellow is still to be met with somewhere in our time. Is he a spy, a jack-ketch, or an underling of office? In truth, almost all the characters in Hogarth are of the class of incorrigibles; so that I often wonder what has become of some of them. Have the worst of them been cleared out, like the breed of noxious animals? Or have they been swept away, like locusts, in the whirlwind of the French Revolution? Or has Mr. Bentham put them into his Panopticon; from which they have come out, so that nobody knows them, like the chimney-sweeper boy at Sadler's Wells, that was thrown into a cauldron and came out a little dapper volunteer? I will not deny that some of them may, like Chaucer's characters, have been modernised a little; but I think I could re-translate a few of them into their mother-tongue, the original honest *black-letter*. We may refine, we may disguise, we may equi-

vocate, we may compound for our vices, without getting rid of them; as we change our liquors, but do not leave off drinking. We may, in this respect, look forward to a decent and moderate, rather than a thorough and radical reform. Or (without going deep into the political question) I conceive we may improve the mechanism, if not the texture of society; that is, we may improve the physical circumstances of individuals and their general relations to the state, though the internal character, like the grain in wood, or the sap in trees, that still rises, bend them how you will, may remain nearly the same. The clay that the potter uses may be of the same quality, coarse or fine in itself, though he may mould it into vessels of very different shape or beauty. Who shall alter the stamina of national character by any systematic process? Who shall make the French respectable, or the English amiable? Yet the Author of THE YEAR 2500[1] has done it! Suppose public spirit to become the general principle of action in the community—how would it shew itself? Would it not then become the fashion, like loyalty, and have its apes and parrots, like loyalty? The man of principle would no longer be distinguished from the crowd, the *servum pecus imitatorum*. There is a cant of democracy as well as of aristocracy; and we have seen both triumphant in our day. The Jacobin of 1794 was the Anti-Jacobin of 1814. The loudest chaunters of the Pæans of liberty were the loudest applauders of the restored doctrine of divine right. They drifted with the stream, they sailed before the breeze in either case. The politician was changed; the man was the same, the very same!—But enough of this.

I do not know any moral to be deduced from this view of the subject but one, namely, that we should mind our own business, cultivate our good qualities, if we have any, and irritate ourselves less about the absurdities of other people, which neither we nor they can help. I grant there is something in what I have said, which might be made to glance towards the doctrines of original sin, grace, election, reprobation, or the Gnostic principle that acts did not determine the virtue or vice of the character; and in those doctrines, so far as they are deducible from what I have said, I agree—but always with a salvo.

[1] Mercier.

ESSAY XXII

ON PEOPLE OF SENSE

People of sense (as they are called) give themselves great and unwarrantable airs over the rest of the world. If we examine the history of mankind, we shall find that the greatest absurdities have been most strenuously maintained by these very persons, who give themselves out as wiser than every body else. The fictions of law, the quibbles of school-divinity, the chicanery of politics, the mysteries of the Cabbala, the doctrine of Divine Right, and the secret of the philosopher's stone,—all the grave impostures that have been acted in the world, have been the contrivance of those who set up for oracles to their neighbours. The learned professions alone have propagated and lent their countenance to as many perverse contradictions and idle fallacies as have puzzled the wits, and set the credulous, thoughtless, unpretending part of mankind together by the ears, ever since the distinction between learning and ignorance subsisted. It is the part of deep investigators to teach others what they do not know themselves, and to prove by infallible rules the truth of any nonsense they happen to take in their heads, or chuse to give out to amuse the gaping multitude. What every one felt and saw for himself—the obvious dictates of common sense and humanity—such superficial studies as these afforded a very insufficient field for the exercise of reason and abstruse philosophy, in the view of 'the demure, grave-looking, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed' despisers of popular opinion; *their* object has regularly been, by taking post in the *terra incognita* of science, to discover what could not be known, and to establish what could be of no use if it were. Hence one age is employed in pulling down what another with infinite pomp and pains has been striving to build up; and our greatest proof of wisdom is to unlearn the follies and prejudices that have been instilled into us by our predecessors. It took ages of ingenuity, of sophistry, and learning, to incorporate the Aristotelian, or scholastic philosophy, into a complete system of absurdity, applicable to all questions, and to all the purposes of life; and it has taken two centuries of metaphysical acuteness and boldness of inquiry, to take to pieces the cumbrous, disproportioned edifice, and to convert the materials to the construction of the *modern French philosophy*, by means of verbal logic, self-evident propositions, and undoubted axioms—a philosophy just as remote

from truth and nature, and setting them equally at defiance. What a number of parties and schools have we in medicine,—all noisy and dogmatical, and agreeing in nothing but contempt and reprobation of each other! Again, how many sects in religion,—all confident of being in the right, able to bring chapter and verse in support of every doctrine and tittle of belief, all ready to damn and excommunicate one another; yet only one, out of all these pretenders to superior wisdom and infallibility, *can* be right; the conclusions of all the others, drawn with such laboured accuracy, and supported with such unbending constancy and solemnity, are, and must be, a bundle of heresies and errors! How many idle schemes and intolerant practices have taken their rise from no better a foundation than a mystic garment, a divining-rod, or Pythagoras's golden thigh!—When Baxter, the celebrated controversial divine, and nonconformist minister in the reign of Charles II. went to preach at Kidderminster, he regularly every Sunday insisted from the pulpit that baptism was necessary to salvation, and roundly asserted, that 'Hell was paved with infants' skulls.' This roused the indignation of the poor women of Kidderminster so much, that they were inclined to pelt their preacher as he passed along the streets. His zeal, however, was as great as theirs, and his learning and his eloquence greater; and he poured out such torrents of texts upon them, and such authorities from grave councils and pious divines, that the poor women were defeated, and forced with tears in their eyes, to surrender their natural feelings and unenlightened convictions to the proofs from reason and Scripture, which they did not know how to answer. Yet these untutored, unsophisticated dictates of nature and instinctive affection have, in their turn, triumphed over all the pride of causistry, and merciless bigotry of Calvinism! We hear it said, that the Inquisition would not have been lately restored in Spain, but for the infatuation and prejudices of the populace. That is, after power and priestcraft have been instilling the poison of superstition and cruelty into the minds of the people for centuries together, hood-winking their understandings, and hardening every feeling of the heart, it is made a taunt and a triumph over this very people (so long the creatures of the government, carefully moulded by them, like clay in the potter's hands, into vessels, not of honour, but of dishonour) that their prejudices and misguided zeal are the only obstacles that stand in the way of the adoption of more liberal and humane principles. The engines and establishments of tyranny, however, are the work of cool, plotting, specious heads, and not the spontaneous product of the levity and rashness of the multitude. It is a work of time to reconcile them to such abominable and revolting abuses of power and authority, as it is

a work of time to wean them from their monstrous infatuation.[1] We may trace a speculative absurdity or practical enormity of this kind into its tenth or fifteenth century, supported story above story, gloss upon gloss, till it mocks at Heaven, and tramples upon earth, propped up on decrees and councils and synods, and appeals to popes and cardinals and fathers of the church (all grave, reverend men!) with the regular clergy and people at their side battling for it, and others below (schismatics and heretics) oppugning it; till in the din and commotion and collision of dry rubs and hard blows, it loses ground, as it rose, century by century; is taken to pieces by timid friends and determined foes; totters and falls, and not a fragment of it is left upon another. A text of Scripture or a passage in ecclesiastical history, is for one whole century 'torn to tatters, to very rags,' and wrangled and fought for, as maintaining the doctrine of the true and Catholic church; in the next century after that, the whole body of the Reformed clergy, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, get hold of it, wrest it out of the hands of their adversaries, and twist and torture it in a thousand different ways, to overturn the abominations of Anti-Christ; in the third a great cabal, a clamour, a noise like the confusion of Babel, jealousies, feuds, heart-burnings, wars in countries, divisions in families, schisms in the church arise, because this text has been thought to favour a lax interpretation of an article of faith, necessary to salvation; and in the fourth century from the time the question began to be agitated with so much heat and fury, it is discovered that no such text existed in the genuine copies. Yet all and each of these, Popes, councils, fathers of the church, reformed leaders, Lutherans, Calvinists, Independents, Presbyterians, sects, schisms, clergy, people, all believe that their own interpretation is the true sense; that, compared with this fabricated and spurious faith of theirs, 'the pillar'd firmament is rottenness, and earth's base built on stubble;' and are so far from being disposed to treat the matter lightly, or to suppose it possible that they do not proceed on solid and indubitable grounds in every contradiction they run into, that they would hand over to the civil power, to be consigned to a prison, the galleys, or the stake (as it happened), any one who demurred for a single instant to their being people of sense, gravity, and wisdom. Sense (that is, that sort of sense which consists in pretension and a claim to superiority) is shewn, not in things that are

[1] It appears, notwithstanding, that this sophistical apology for the restoration of the Spanish Inquisition, with the reversion of sovereign power into kingly hands, was false and spurious. The power has once more reverted into the hands of an abused people, and the Inquisition has been abolished.—Since this was written, there has been another turn of the screws, and——But no more on that head.

plain and clear, but in deciding upon doubts and difficulties; the greater the doubt, therefore, the greater must be the dogmatism and the consequential airs of those who profess to settle points beyond the reach of the vulgar; nay, to increase the authority of such persons, the utmost stress must be laid on the most frivolous as well as ticklish questions, and the most unconscionable absurdities have always had the stoutest sticklers, and the most numerous victims. The affectation of sense so far, then, has given birth to more folly and done more mischief than any one thing else.

Hence we may, perhaps, be able to assign one reason, why those arts which do not undertake to unfold mysteries and inculcate dogmas, generally shine out at first with full lustre, because they start from the 'vantage ground of nature, and are not buried under the dust and rubbish of ages of perverse prejudice. Biblical critics were a long time at work to strip Popery of her finery, muffled up as she was in the formal disguises of interest, pride, and bigotry. It was like peeling off the coats of an onion, which is a work of time and patience. Titian, on the other hand, (which our protestant painters are sometimes amazed at) saw the colour of the skin at once, without any intellectual film spread over it; Raphael painted the actions and passions of men, without any indirect process, as he found them. The fine arts, such as painting, which reveals the face of nature, and poetry, which paints the heart of man, are true and unsophisticated, because they are conversant with real objects, and because they are cultivated for amusement without any further view or inference; and please by the truth of imitation only. Yet your *people of sense*, in all ages, have made a point of scouting the arts of painting, music, and poetry, as frivolous, effeminate, and worthless, as appealing to sentiment and fancy alone, and involving no useful theory or principle, because they afforded them no scope, no opportunity for *darkening knowledge*, and setting up their own blindness and frailty as the measure of abstract truth, and the standard of universal propriety. Poetry acts by sympathy with nature, that is, with the natural impulses, customs, and imaginations of men, and is, on that account, always popular, delightful, and at the same time instructive. It is nature moralizing and *idealizing* for us; inasmuch as, by shewing us things as they are, it implicitly teaches us what they ought to be; and the grosser feelings, by passing through the strainers of this imaginary, wide-extended experience, acquire an involuntary tendency to higher objects. Shakespear was, in this sense, not only one of the greatest poets, but one of the greatest moralists that we have. Those who read him are the happier, better, and wiser for it. No one (that I know of) is the happier, better, or wiser, for reading

Mr. Shelley's Prometheus Unbound.[1] One thing is that nobody reads it. And the reason for one or both is the same, that he is not a poet, but a sophist, a theorist, a controversial writer in verse. He gives us, for representations of things, rhapsodies of words. He does not lend the colours of imagination and the ornaments of style to the objects of nature, but paints gaudy, flimsy, allegorical pictures on gauze, on the cobwebs of his own brain, 'Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.' He assumes certain doubtful speculative notions, and proceeds to prove their truth by describing them in detail as matters of fact. This mixture of fanatic zeal with poetical licentiousness is not quite the thing. The poet describes what he pleases *as* he pleases—if he is not tied down to certain given principles, if he is not to plead prejudice and opinion as his warrant or excuse, we are left out at sea, at the mercy of every reckless fancy-monger, who may be tempted to erect an *ipse dixit* of his own, by the help of a few idle flourishes and extravagant epithets, into an exclusive system of morals and philosophy. The poet describes vividly and individually, so that any general results from what he writes must be from the aggregate of well-founded particulars: to embody an abstract theory, as if it were a given part of actual nature, is an impertinence and indecorum. The charm of poetry, however, depends on the union of fancy with reality, on its finding a tally in the human breast; and without this, all its turnid efforts will be less pernicious than vain and abortive. Plato shewed himself to be a person of frigid apprehension, 'with eye severe and beard of formal cut,' when he banished the poets from his Republic, as corrupters of morals, because they described the various passions and affections of the mind. This did not suit with that Procrustes' bed of criticism on which he wished to stretch and lop them; but Homer's imitations of nature have been more popular than Plato's inversions of her; and his morality is at least as sound. The errors of nature are accidental and pardonable; those of science are systematic and incorrigible. The understanding, or reasoning faculty presumes too much over her younger sisters; and yet plays as fantastic tricks as any of them, only with more solemnity, which enhances the evil. We have partly seen what right she has, on the score of past behaviour, to set up for a strict and unerring guide. The haughtiness of her pretensions at present, 'full of wise saws and modern instances,' is not the most unequivocal pledge of her abandonment of her old errors. To bring down this account then from the ancients to the moderns.

People of sense, the self-conceited wise, are at all times at issue

[1] This was written in Mr. Shelley's life-time.

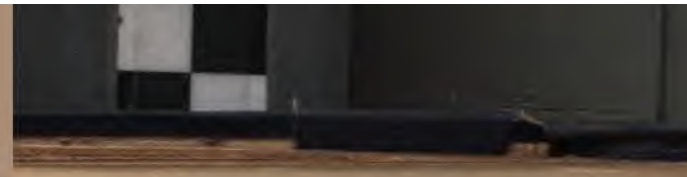
with common sense and feeling. They formerly dogmatised on speculative matters, out of the reach of common apprehension; they now dogmatise with the same headstrong self-sufficiency on practical questions, more within the province of actual inquiry and observation. In this new and more circumscribed career, they set out with exploding the sense of all those who have gone before them, as of too light and fanciful a texture. They make a clear stage of all former opinions—get rid of the *mixed modes* of prejudice, authority, suggestion—and begin *de novo*, with reason for their rule, certainty for their guide, and the greatest possible good as a *sine qua non*. The modern Panoptic and Chrestomathic School of reformers and reconstructors of society propose to do it upon entirely mechanical and scientific principles. Nothing short of that will satisfy their scrupulous pretensions to wisdom and gravity. They proceed by the rule and compass, by logical diagrams, and with none but demonstrable conclusions, and leave all the taste, fancy, and sentiment of the thing to the admirers of Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. That work is to them a very flimsy and superficial performance, because it is rhetorical and figurative, and they judge of solidity by barrenness, of depth by dryness. Till they see a little farther into it, they will not be able to answer it, or counteract its influence; and yet that were a task of some importance to atchieve. They say that the proportions are false, because the colouring is fine, which is bad logic. If they do not like a painted statue, a florid argument, that is a matter of taste and not of reasoning. Some may conceive that the gold, the sterling bullion of thought, is the better for being wrought into rich and elegant figures; *they* are the only people who contend that it is the worse on that account. These crude projectors give, in their new plan and elevation of society, neither 'princes' palaces nor poor men's cottages,' but a sort of log-houses and gable-ends, in which the solid contents and square dimensions are to be ascertained and parcelled out to a nicety; they employ the carpenter, joiner, and bricklayer, but will have nothing to say to the plasterer, painter, paper-hanger, upholsterer, carver and gilder, &c.; so that I am afraid, in this fastidious and luxurious age, they will hardly find tenants for their bare walls and skeletons of houses, run up in haste and by the job. Their system wants *house-warming*; it is destitute of comfort as of outside shew; it has nothing to recommend it but its poverty and nakedness. They profess to set aside and reject all compromise with the prejudices of authority, the allurements of sense, the customs of the world, and the instincts of nature. They will make a man with a quadrant, as the tailors at Laputa made a suit of clothes. They put the mind into a

machine, as the potter puts a lump of clay into a mould, and out it comes in any clumsy or disagreeable shape that they would have it. They hate all grace, ornament, elegance. They are addicted to abstruse science, but sworn enemies to the fine arts. They are a kind of puritans in morals. Do you suppose that the race of the Iconoclasts is dead with the dispute in Laud's time about image-worship? We have just the same set of moon-eyed philosophers in our days, who cannot bear to be dazzled with the sun of beauty. They are only half-alive. They can distinguish the hard edges and determinate outline of things; but are alike insensible to the stronger impulses of passion, to the finer essences of thought. Their intellectual food does not assimilate with the juices of the mind, or turn to subtle spirit, but lies a crude, undigested heap of material substance, begetting only the windy impertinence of words. They are acquainted with the form, not the power of truth; they insist on what is necessary, and never arrive at what is desirable. They refer every thing to utility, and yet banish pleasure with stoic pride and cynic slovenliness. They talk big of increasing the sum of human happiness, and yet in the mighty grasp and extension of their views, leave hardly any one source from which the smallest ray of satisfaction can be derived. They have an instinctive aversion to plays, novels, amusements of every kind; and this not so much from affectation or want of knowledge, as from sheer incapacity and want of taste. Shew one of these men of narrow comprehension a beautiful prospect, and he wonders you can take delight in what is of no use: you would hardly suppose that this very person had written a book, and was perhaps at the moment holding an argument, to prove that nothing is useful but what pleases. Speak of Shakespear, and another of the same *automatic* school will tell you he has read him, but could find nothing in him. Point to Hogarth, and they do confess there is something in his prints, that, by contrast, throws a pleasing light on their Utopian schemes, and the future progress of society. One of these pseudo-philosophers would think it a disparagement to compare him to Aristotle: he fancies himself as great a man as Aristotle was in his day, and that the world is much wiser now than it was in the time of Aristotle. He would be glad to live the ten remaining years of his life, a year at a time at the end of the next ten centuries, to see the effect of his writings on social institutions, though posterity will know no more than his contemporaries that so great a man ever existed. So little does he know of himself or the world! Persons of his class, indeed, cautiously shut themselves up from society, and take no more notice of men than of animals; and from their ignorance of what mankind are, can tell

exactly what they will be. 'What can we reason but from what we know?'—is not their maxim. Reason with them is a mathematical force that acts with most certainty in the absence of experience, in the vacuum of pure speculation. These secure alarmists and dreaming guardians of the state are like superannuated watchmen enclosed in a sentry-box, that never hear 'when thieves break through and steal.' They put an oil-skin over their heads, that the dust raised by the passions and interests of the countless, ever-moving multitude, may not annoy or disturb the clearness of their vision. They build a Penitentiary, and are satisfied that Dyot-street, Bloomsbury-square, will no longer send forth its hordes of young delinquents, 'an aerie of children,' the embryo performers on locks and pockets for the next generation. They put men into a Panopticon, like a glass hive, to carry on all sorts of handicrafts ('——So work the honey-bees'—) under the omnipresent eye of the inventor, and want and idleness are banished from the world. They propose to erect a Chrestomathic school, by cutting down some fine old trees on the classic ground where Milton thought and wrote, to introduce a rabble of children, who for the Greek and Latin languages, poetry, and history, that fine pabulum of useful enthusiasm, that breath of immortality infused into our youthful blood, that balm and cordial of our future years, are to be drugged with chemistry and apothecaries' receipts, are to be taught to do every thing, and to see and feel nothing;—that the grubbing up of elegant arts and polite literature may be followed by the systematic introduction of accomplished barbarism and mechanical quackery. Such enlightened geniuses would pull down Stonehenge to build pig-sties, and would convert Westminster Abbey into a central House of Correction. It would be in vain to point to the arched windows,

'Shedding a dim, religious light,'

to touch the deep, solemn organ-stop in their ears, to turn to the statue of Newton, to gaze upon the sculptured marble on the walls, to call back the hopes and fears that lie buried there, to cast a wistful look at Poet's Corner (they scorn the Muse!)—all this would not stand one moment in the way of any of the schemes of these retrograde reformers; who, instead of being legislators for the world, and stewards to the intellectual inheritance of nations, are hardly fit to be parish-beadles, or pettifogging attorneys to a litigated estate! 'Their speech bewrayeth them.' The leader of this class of reasoners does not write to be understood, because he would make fewer converts, if he did. The language he adopts is his own—a word to the wise—a technical and conventional jargon, unintelligible



to others, and conveying no idea to himself in common with the rest of mankind, purposely cut off from human sympathy and ordinary apprehension. Mr. Bentham's writings require to be translated into a foreign tongue or his own, before they can be read at all, except by the adepts. This is not a very fair or very wise proceeding. No man who invents words arbitrarily, can be sure that he uses them conscientiously. There is no check upon him in the popular criticism exercised by the mass of readers—there is no clue to propriety in the habitual associations of his own mind. He who pretends to fit words to things, will much oftener accommodate things to words, to answer a theory. Words are a measure of truth. They ascertain (intuitively) the degrees, inflections, and powers of things in a wonderful manner; and he who voluntarily deprives himself of their assistance, does not go the way to arrive at any very nice or sure results. Language is the medium of our communication with the thoughts of others. But whoever becomes wise, becomes wise by sympathy; whoever is powerful, becomes so by making others sympathize with him. To think justly, we must understand what others mean: to know the value of our thoughts, we must try their effect on other minds. There is this privilege in the use of a conventional style, as there was in that of the learned languages—a man may be as absurd as he pleases without being ridiculous. His folly and his wisdom are alike a secret to the generality. If it were possible to contrive a perfect language, consistent with itself, and answering to the complexity of human affairs, there would be some excuse for the attempt; but he who knows any thing of the nature of language, or of the complexity of human thought, knows that this is impossible. What is gained in formality, is more than lost in force, ease, and perspicuity. Mr. Bentham's language, in short, is like his reasoning, a logical apparatus, which will work infallibly and perform wonders, taking it for granted that his principles and definitions are universally true and intelligible; but as this is not exactly the case, neither the one nor the other is of much use or authority. Thus, the maxim that 'mankind act from calculation' may be, in a general sense, true: but the moment you apply this maxim to subject all their actions systematically and demonstrably to reason, and to exclude passion both in common and in extreme cases, you give it a sense in which the principle is false, and in which all the inferences built upon it (many and mighty, no doubt) fall to the ground. 'Madmen reason.' But in what proportion does this hold good? How far does reason guide them, or their madness err? There is a difference between reason and madness in this respect; but according to Mr. Bentham, there can be none; for all men act from calculation, and equally so.

'So runs the bond.' Passion is liable to be restrained by reason, as drunkenness may be changed to sobriety by some strong motive: but passion is not reason, *i.e.* does not act by the same rule or law; and therefore all that follows is, that men act (according to the common-sense of the thing) either from passion or reason, from impulse or calculation, more or less, as circumstances lead. But no sweeping, metaphysical conclusion can be drawn from hence, as if reason were absolute, and passion a mere nonentity in the government of the world. People in general, or writers speculating on human actions, form wrong judgments concerning them, because they decide coolly, and at a distance, on what is done in heat and on the spur of the occasion. Man is not a machine; nor is he to be measured by mechanical rules. The decisions of abstract reason would apply to what men might do if all men were philosophers: but if all men were philosophers, there would be no need of systems of philosophy!

The race of alchemists and visionaries is not yet extinct; and, what is remarkable, we find them existing in the shape of deep logicians and enlightened legislators. They have got a menstruum for dissolving the lead and copper of society, and turning it to pure gold, as the adepts of old had a trick for finding the philosopher's stone. The author of St. Leon has represented his hero as possessed of the *elixir vitæ* and *aurum potabile*. The author of the Political Justice has adopted one half of this romantic fiction as a serious hypothesis, and maintains the natural immortality of man, without a figure. The truth is, that persons of the most precise and formal understandings are persons of the loosest and most extravagant imaginations. Take from them their *norma loquendi*, their literal clue, and there is no absurdity into which they will not fall with pleasure. They have no means or principle of judging of that which does not admit of absolute proof; and between this and the idlest fiction, they perceive no medium:—as those artists who take likenesses with a machine, are quite thrown out in their calculations when they have to rely on the eye or hand alone. People who are accustomed to trust to their imaginations or feelings, know how far to go, and how to keep within certain limits: those who seldom exert these faculties are all abroad, in a wide sea of speculation without rudder or compass, the instant they leave the shore of matter-of-fact or dry reasoning, and never stop short of the last absurdity. They go all lengths, or none. They laugh at poets, and are themselves lunatics. They are the dupes of all sorts of projectors and impostors. Being of a busy, meddlesome turn, they are for reducing whatever comes into their heads (and cannot be demonstrated by mood and figure to amount to a contradiction in terms) to practice.

What they would scout in a fiction, they would set about realizing in sober sadness, and melt their fortunes in compassing what others consider as the amusement of an idle hour. Astolpho's voyage to the moon in Ariosto, they criticize sharply as a quaint and ridiculous burlesque: but if any one had the face seriously to undertake such a thing, they would immediately patronize it, and defy any one to prove by a logical dilemma that the attempt was physically impossible. So, again, we find that painters and engravers, whose attention is confined and rivetted to a minute investigation of actual objects, or of visible lines and surfaces, are apt to fly out into all the extravagance and rhapsodies of the most unbridled fanaticism. Several of the most eminent are at this moment Swedenborgians, animal magnetists, &c. The mind (as it should seem), too long tied down to the evidence of sense and a number of trifling particulars, is wearied of the bondage, revolts at it, and instinctively takes refuge in the wildest schemes and most magnificent contradictions of an unlimited faith. Poets, on the contrary, who are continually throwing off the superfluities of feeling or fancy in little sportive sallies and short excursions with the Muse, do not find the want of any greater or more painful effort of thought; leave the ascent of the 'highest Heaven of Invention' as a holiday task to persons of more mechanical habits and turn of mind; and the characters of poet and sceptic are now often united in the same individual, as those of poet and prophet were supposed to be of old.

ESSAY XXIII

ON ANTIQUITY

There is no such thing as Antiquity in the ordinary acceptation we affix to the term. Whatever is or has been, while it is passing, must be modern. The early ages may have been barbarous in themselves; but they have become *ancient* with the slow and silent lapse of successive generations. The 'olden times' are only such in reference to us. The past is rendered strange, mysterious, visionary, awful, from the great gap in time that parts us from it, and the long perspective of waning years. Things gone by and almost forgotten, look dim and dull, uncouth and quaint, from our ignorance of them, and the mutability of customs. But in their day—they were fresh, unimpaired, in full vigour, familiar, and glossy. The Children in the Wood, and Percy's Relics, were once recent productions; and Auld

ON ANTIQUITY

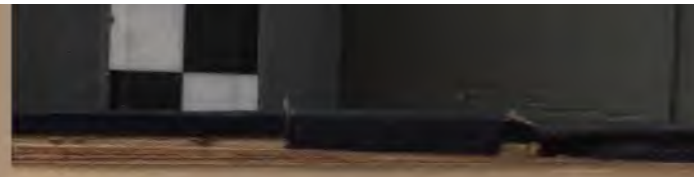
Robin Gray was, in his time, a very common-place old fellow! The wars of York and Lancaster, while they lasted, were 'lively, audible, and full of vent,' as fresh and lusty as the white and red roses that distinguished their different banners, though they have since became a bye-word and a solecism in history.

The sun shone in Julius Cæsar's time just as it does now. On the road-side between Winchester and Salisbury are some remains of old Roman encampments, with their double lines of circumvallation (now turned into pasturage for sheep), which answer exactly to the descriptions of this kind in Cæsar's Commentaries. In a dull and cloudy atmosphere, I can conceive that this is the identical spot, that the first Cæsar trod,—and figure to myself the deliberate movements and scarce perceptible march of close-embodied legions. But if the sun breaks out, making its way through dazzling, fleecy clouds, lights up the blue serene, and gilds the sombre earth, I can no longer persuade myself that it is the same scene as formerly, or transfer the actual image before me so far back. The brightness of nature is not easily reduced to the low, twilight tone of history; and the impressions of sense defeat and dissipate the faint traces of learning and tradition. It is only by an effort of reason, to which fancy is averse, that I bring myself to believe that the sun shone as bright, that the sky was as blue, and the earth as green, two thousand years ago as it is at present. How ridiculous this seems; yet so it is!

The *dark* or middle ages, when every thing was hid in the fog and haze of confusion and ignorance, seem, to the same involuntary kind of prejudice, older and farther off, and more inaccessible to the imagination, than the brilliant and well-defined periods of Greece and Rome. A Gothic ruin appears buried in a greater depth of obscurity, to be weighed down and rendered venerable with the hoar of more distant ages, to have been longer mouldering into neglect and oblivion, to be a record and memento of events more wild and alien to our own times, than a Grecian temple.[1] Amadis de Gaul, and the seven Champions of Christendom, with me (honestly speaking) rank as contemporaries with Theseus, Pirithous, and the heroes of the fabulous ages. My imagination will stretch no farther back into the commencement of time than the first traces and rude dawn of

[1] 'The Gothic architecture, though not so ancient as the Grecian, is more so to our imagination, with which the artist is more concerned than with absolute truth.'—*Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses*, vol. ii. p. 138.

Till I met with this remark in so circumspect and guarded a writer as Sir Joshua, I was afraid of being charged with extravagance in some of the above assertions. *Pereant isti qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.* It is thus that our favourite speculations are often accounted paradoxes by the ignorant,—while by the learned reader they are set down as plagiarisms.



civilization and mighty enterprise, in either case; and in attempting to force it upwards by the scale of chronology, it only recoils upon itself, and dwindles from a lofty survey of 'the dark rearward and abyss of time,' into a poor and puny calculation of insignificant cyphers. In like manner, I cannot go back to any time more remote and dreary than that recorded in Stow's and Holinshed's Chronicles, unless I turn to 'the wars of old Assaracus and Inachus divine,' and the gorgeous events of Eastern history, where the distance of place may be said to add to the length of time and weight of thought. That is old (in sentiment and poetry) which is decayed, shadowy, imperfect, out of date, and changed from what it was. That of which we have a distinct idea, which comes before us entire and made out in all its parts, will have a novel appearance, however old in reality,—and cannot be impressed with the romantic and superstitious character of antiquity. Those times that we can parallel with our own in civilization and knowledge, seem advanced into the same line with our own in the order of progression. The perfection of art does not look like the infancy of things. Or those times are prominent, and, as it were, confront the present age, that are raised high in the scale of polished society,—and the trophies of which stand out above the low, obscure, grovelling level of barbarism and rusticity. Thus, Rome and Athens were two cities set on a hill, that could not be hid, and that every where meet the retrospective eye of history. It is not the full-grown, articulated, thoroughly accomplished periods of the world, that we regard with the pity or reverence due to age; so much as those imperfect, unformed, uncertain periods, which seem to totter on the verge of non-existence, to shrink from the grasp of our feeble imaginations, as they crawl out of, or retire into, the womb of time, and of which our utmost assurance is to doubt whether they ever were or not!

To give some other instances of this feeling, taken at random: Whittington and his Cat, the first and favourite studies of my childhood, are, to my way of thinking, as old and reverend personages as any recorded in more authentic history. It must have been long before the invention of triple bob-majors, that Bow-bells rung out their welcome never-to-be-forgotten peal, hailing him Thrice Lord Mayor of London. Does not all we know relating to the site of old London-wall, and the first stones that were laid of this mighty metropolis, seem of a far older date (hid in the lap of 'chaos and old night') than the splendid and imposing details of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire?—Again, the early Italian pictures of Cimabue, Giotto, and Ghirlandaio are covered with the marks of unquestionable antiquity; while the Greek statues, done a thousand

years before them, shine in glossy, undiminished splendour, and flourish in immortal youth and beauty. The latter Grecian Gods, as we find them there represented, are to all appearance a race of modern fine gentlemen, who *led the life of honour* with their favourite mistresses of mortal or immortal mould,—were gallant, graceful, well-dressed, and well-spoken; whereas the Gothic deities long after, carved in horrid wood or misshapen stone, and worshipped in dreary waste or tangled forest, belong, in the mind's heraldry, to almost as ancient a date as those elder and discarded Gods of the Pagan mythology, Ops, and Rhea and old Saturn,—those strange anomalies of earth and cloudy spirit, born of the elements and conscious will, and clothing themselves and all things with shape and formal being. The Chronicle of Brute, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, has a tolerable air of antiquity in it; so in the dramatic line, the Ghost of one of the old kings of Ormus, introduced as Prologue to Fulke Greville's play of Mustapha, is reasonably far-fetched, and palpably obscure. A monk in the Popish Calendar, or even in the Canterbury Tales, is a more questionable and out-of-the-way personage than the Chiron of Achilles, or the priest in Homer. When Chaucer, in his Troilus and Cressida, makes the Trojan hero invoke the absence of light, in these two lines—

> Why proffer'st thou light me for to sell?
> Go sell it them that smallé seles grave!

he is guilty of an anachronism; or at least I much doubt whether there was such a profession as that of seal-engraver in the Trojan war. But the dimness of the objects and the quaintness of the allusion throw us farther back into the night of time, than the golden, glittering images of the Iliad. The Travels of Anacharsis are less obsolete at this time of day, than Coryate's Crudities, or Fuller's Worthies. 'Here is some of the ancient city,' said a Roman, taking up a handful of dust from beneath his feet. The ground we tread on is as old as the creation, though it does not seem so, except when collected into gigantic masses, or separated by gloomy solitudes from modern uses and the purposes of common life. The lone Helvellyn and the silent Andes are in thought coeval with the Globe itself, and can only perish with it. The Pyramids of Egypt are vast, sublime, old, eternal; but Stonehenge, built no doubt in a later day, satisfies my capacity for the sense of antiquity; it seems as if as much rain had drizzled on its grey, withered head, and it had watched out as many winter-nights; the hand of time is upon it, and it has sustained the burden of years upon its back, a wonder and a ponderous riddle, time out of mind, without known origin or use, baffling

fable or conjecture, the credulity of the ignorant, or wise men's search.

> Thou noblest monument of Albion's isle,
> Whether by Merlin's aid, from Scythia's shore
> To Amber's fatal plain Pendragon bore,
> Huge frame of giant hands, the mighty pile,
> T'entomb his Briton's slain by Hengist's guile:
> Or Druid priests, sprinkled with human gore,
> Taught mid thy massy maze their mystic lore:
> Or Danish chiefs, enrich'd with savage spoil,
> To victory's idol vast, an unhewn shrine,
> Rear'd the rude heap, or in thy hallow'd ground
> Repose the kings of Brutus' genuine line;
> Or here those kings in solemn state were crown'd;
> Studious to trace thy wondrous origin,
> We muse on many an ancient tale renown'd.
>
> *Warton.*

So it is with respect to ourselves also; it is the sense of change or decay that marks the difference between the real and apparent progress of time, both in the events of our own lives and the history of the world we live in.

Impressions of a peculiar and accidental nature, of which few traces are left, and which return seldom or never, fade in the distance, and are consigned to obscurity,—while those that belong to a given and definite class are kept up, and assume a constant and tangible form, from familiarity and habit. That which was personal to myself merely, is lost and confounded with other things, like a drop in the ocean; it was but a point at first, which by its nearness affected me, and by its removal becomes nothing; while circumstances of a general interest and abstract importance present the same distinct, well-known aspect as ever, and are durable in proportion to the extent of their influence. Our own idle feelings and foolish fancies we get tired or grow ashamed of, as their novelty wears out; 'when we become men, we put away childish things;' but the impressions we derive from the exercise of our higher faculties last as long as the faculties themselves. They have nothing to do with time, place, and circumstance; and are of universal applicability and recurrence. An incident in my own history, that delighted or tormented me very much at the time, I may have long since blotted from my memory,—or have great difficulty in calling to mind after a certain period; but I can never forget the first time of my seeing Mrs. Siddons act;—which is as if it happened yesterday; and the reason is because it has been something for me to think of ever since.

ON ANTIQUITY

The petty and the personal, that which appeals to our senses and our appetites, passes away with the occasion that gives it birth. The grand and the ideal, that which appeals to the imagination, can only perish with it, and remains with us, unimpaired in its lofty abstraction, from youth to age; as wherever we go, we still see the same heavenly bodies shining over our heads! An old familiar face, the house that we were brought up in, sometimes the scenes and places that we formerly knew and loved, may be changed, so that we hardly know them again; the characters in books, the faces in old pictures, the propositions in Euclid, remain the same as when they were first pointed out to us. There is a continual alternation of generation and decay in individual forms and feelings, that marks the progress of existence, and the ceaseless current of our lives, borne along with it; but this does not extend to our love of art or knowledge of nature. It seems a long time ago since some of the first events of the French Revolution; the prominent characters that figured then have been swept away and succeeded by others; yet I cannot say that this circumstance has in any way abated my hatred of tyranny, or reconciled my understanding to the fashionable doctrine of Divine Right. The sight of an old newspaper of that date would give one a fit of the spleen for half an hour; on the other hand, it must be confessed, Mr. Burke's Reflections on this subject are as fresh and dazzling as in the year 1791; and his Letter to a Noble Lord is even now as interesting as Lord John Russell's Letter to Mr. Wilberforce, which appeared only a few weeks back. Ephemeral politics and still-born productions are speedily consigned to oblivion; great principles and original works are a match even for time itself!

We may, by following up this train of ideas, give some account why time runs faster as our years increase. We gain by habit and experience a more determinate and settled, that is, a more uniform notion of things. We refer each particular to a given standard. Our impressions acquire the character of identical propositions. Our most striking thoughts are turned into truisms. One observation is like another, that I made formerly. The idea I have of a certain character or subject is just the same as I had ten years ago. I have learnt nothing since. There is no alteration perceptible, no advance made; so that the two points of time seem to touch and coincide. I get from the one to the other immediately by the familiarity of habit, by the undistinguishing process of abstraction. What I can recal so easily and mechanically does not seem far off; it is completely within my reach, and consequently close to me in apprehension. I have no intricate web of curious speculation to wind or unwind, to

pass from one state of feeling and opinion to the other; no complicated train of associations, which place an immeasurable barrier between my knowledge or my ignorance at different epochs. There is no contrast, no repugnance to widen the interval; no new sentiment infused, like another atmosphere, to lengthen the perspective. I am but where I was. I see the object before me just as I have been accustomed to do. The ideas are written down in the brain as in the page of a book—*totidem verbis et literis*. The mind becomes *stereotyped*. By not going forward to explore new regions, or break up new grounds, we are thrown back more and more upon our past acquisitions; and this habitual recurrence increases the facility and indifference with which we make the imaginary transition. By thinking of what has been, we change places with ourselves, and transpose our personal identity at will; so as to fix the slider of our improgressive continuance at whatever point we please. This is an advantage or a disadvantage, which we have not in youth. After a certain period, we neither lose nor gain, neither add to, nor diminish our stock; up to that period we do nothing else but lose our former notions and being, and gain a new one every instant. Our life is like the birth of a new day; the dawn breaks apace, and the clouds clear away. A new world of thought and observation is opened to our search. A year makes the difference of an age. A total alteration takes place in our ideas, feelings, habits, looks. We outgrow ourselves. A separate set of objects, of the existence of which we had not a suspicion, engages and occupies our whole souls. Shapes and colours of all varieties, and of gorgeous tint, intercept our view of what we were. Life thickens. Time glows on its axle. Every revolution of the wheel gives an unsettled aspect to things. The world and its inhabitants turn round, and we forget one change of scene in another. Art woos us; science tempts us into her intricate labyrinths; each step presents unlooked-for vistas, and closes upon us our backward path. Our onward road is strange, obscure, and infinite. We are bewildered in a shadow, lost in a dream. Our perceptions have the brightness and the indistinctness of a trance. Our continuity of consciousness is broken, crumbles, and falls in pieces. We go on, learning and forgetting every hour. Our feelings are chaotic, confused, strange to each other and to ourselves. Our life does not hang together,—but straggling, disjointed, winds its slow length along, stretching out to the endless future—unmindful of the ignorant past. We seem many beings in one, and cast the slough of our existence daily. The birth of knowledge is the generation of time. The unfolding of our experience is long and voluminous; nor do we all at once recover from our surprise at the

number of objects that distract our attention. Every new study is a separate, arduous, and insurmountable undertaking. We are lost in wonder at the magnitude, the difficulty, and the interminable prospect. We spell out the first years of our existence, like learning a lesson for the first time, where every advance is slow, doubtful, interesting; afterwards we rehearse our parts by rote, and are hardly conscious of the meaning. A very short period (from fifteen to twenty-five or thirty) includes the whole map and table of contents of human life. From that time we may be said to live our lives over again, repeat ourselves,—the same thoughts return at stated intervals, like the tunes of a barrel-organ; and the volume of the universe is no more than a form of words and book of reference.

Time in general is supposed to move faster or slower, as we attend more or less to the succession of our ideas, in the same manner as distance is increased or lessened by the greater or less variety of intervening objects. There is, however, a difference in this respect. Suspense, where the mind is engrossed with one idea, and kept from amusing itself with any other, is not only the most uncomfortable, but the most tiresome of all things. The fixing our attention on a single point makes us more sensible of the delay, and hangs an additional weight of fretful impatience on every moment of expectation. People in country-places, without employment or artificial resources, complain that time lies heavy on their hands. Its leaden pace is not occasioned by the quantity of thought, but by vacancy, and the continual languid craving after excitement. It wants spirit and vivacity to give it motion. We are on the watch to see how time goes, and it appears to lag behind, because, in the absence of objects to arrest our immediate attention, we are always getting on before it. We do not see its divisions, but we feel the galling pressure of each creeping sand that measures out our hours. Again, a rapid succession of external objects and amusements, which leave no room for reflection, and where one gratification is forgotten in the next, makes time pass quickly, as well as delightfully. We do not perceive an extent of surface, but only a succession of points. We are whirled swiftly along by the hand of dissipation, but cannot stay to look behind us. On the contrary, change of scene, travelling through a foreign country, or the meeting with a variety of striking adventures that lay hold of the imagination, and continue to haunt it in a waking dream, will make days seem weeks. From the crowd of events, the number of distinct points of view, brought into a small compass, we seem to have passed through a great length of time, when it is no such thing. In traversing a flat, barren country, the monotony of our ideas fatigues, and makes the way longer; whereas,

if the prospect is diversified and picturesque, we get over the miles without counting them. In painting or writing, hours are melted almost into minutes: the mind, absorbed in the eagerness of its pursuit, forgets the time necessary to accomplish it; and, indeed, the clock often finds us employed on the same thought or part of a picture that occupied us when it struck last. It seems, then, there are several other circumstances besides the number and distinctness of our ideas, to be taken into the account in the measure of time, or in considering 'whom time ambles withal, whom time gallops withal, and whom he stands still withal.'[1] Time wears away slowly with a man in solitary confinement; not from the number or variety of his ideas, but from their weary sameness, fretting like drops of water. The imagination may distinguish the lapse of time by the brilliant variety of its tints, and the many striking shapes it assumes; the heart feels it by the weight of sadness, and 'grim-visaged, comfortless despair!'

I will conclude this subject with remarking, that the fancied shortness of life is aided by the apprehension of a future state. The constantly directing our hopes and fears to a higher state of being beyond the present, necessarily brings death habitually before us, and defines the narrow limits within which we hold our frail existence, as mountains bound the horizon, and unavoidably draw our attention to it. This may be one reason among others why the fear of death was a less prominent feature in ancient times than it is at present; because the thoughts of it, and of a future state, were less frequently impressed on the mind by religion and morality. The greater progress of civilization and security in modern times has also con-

[1] '*Rosalind.* Time travels in divers paces with divers persons: I'll tell you who time ambles withal, who time trots withal, who time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

Orlando. I prythee, who doth he trot withal?

Ros. Marry, he trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'nnight, time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven years.

Orl. Who ambles time withal?

Ros. With a priest that lacks Latin, and a rich man that hath not the gout; for the one sleeps easily, because he cannot study; and the other lives merrily, because he feels no pain; the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning; the other knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury. These time ambles with.

Orl. Who doth he gallop withal?

Ros. With a thief to the gallows; for though he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.

Orl. Who stays it withal?

Ros. With lawyers in the vacation; for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how time moves.'—*As You Like It*, Act III. Scene II.

siderably to do with our practical effeminacy; for though the old Pagans were not bound to think of death as a religious duty, they never could foresee when they should be compelled to submit to it, as a natural necessity, or accident of war, &c. They viewed death, therefore, with an eye of speculative indifference and practical resolution. That the idea of annihilation did not impress them with the same horror and repugnance as it does the modern believer, or even infidel, is easily accounted for (though a writer in the Edinburgh Review thinks the question insoluble) [1] from this plain reason, *viz.* that not being taught from childhood a belief in a future state of existence as a part of the creed of their country, the supposition that there was no such state in store for them, could not shock their feelings, or confound their imagination, in the same manner as it does with us, who have been brought up in such a belief; and who live with those who deeply cherish, and would be unhappy without a full conviction of it. It is the Christian religion alone that takes us to the highest pinnacle of the Temple, to point out to us 'the glory hereafter to be revealed,' and that makes us shrink back with affright from the precipice of annihilation that yawns below. Those who have never entertained a hope, cannot be greatly staggered by having it struck from under their feet; those who have never been led to expect the reversion of an estate, will not be excessively disappointed at finding that the inheritance has descended to others.

[1] 'On the other point, namely, the dark and sceptical spirit prevalent through the works of this poet (Lord Byron), we shall not now utter all that we feel, but rather direct the notice of our readers to it as a singular phenomenon in the poetry of the age. Whoever has studied the spirit of Greek and Roman literature, must have been struck with the comparative disregard and indifference, wherewith the thinking men of these exquisitely polished nations contemplated those subjects of darkness and mystery which afford at some period or other of his life, so much disquiet—we had almost said so much agony, to the mind of every reflecting modern. It is difficult to account for this in any very satisfactory, and we suspect altogether impossible to do so in any strictly logical, manner. In reading the works of Plato and his interpreter Cicero, we find the germs of all the doubts and anxieties to which we have alluded, so far as these are connected with the workings of our reason. The singularity is, that those clouds of darkness, which hang over the intellect, do not appear, so far as we can perceive, to have thrown at any time any very alarming shade upon the feelings or temper of the ancient sceptic. We should think a very great deal of this was owing to the brilliancy and activity of his southern fancy. The lighter spirits of antiquity, like the more mercurial of our moderns, sought refuge in mere *gaieté du cœur* and derision. The graver poets and philosophers—and poetry and philosophy were in those days seldom disunited—built up some airy and beautiful system of mysticism, each following his own devices, and suiting the erection to his own peculiarities of hope and inclination; and this being once accomplished, the mind appears to have felt quite satisfied with what it had done, and to have reposed amidst the splendours of its sand-built fantastic edifice, with as much security as if it had been grooved and rivetted into

THE PLAIN SPEAKER

ESSAY XXIV

ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WRITING AND SPEAKING

'Some minds are proportioned to that which may be dispatched at once, or within a short return of time: others to that which begins afar off, and is to be won with length of pursuit.' LORD BACON.

It is a common observation, that few persons can be found who speak and write equally well. Not only is it obvious that the two faculties do not always go together in the same proportions: but they are not unusually in direct opposition to each other. We find that the greatest authors often make the worst company in the world; and again, some of the liveliest fellows imaginable in conversation, or extempore speaking, seem to lose all their vivacity and spirit the moment they set pen to paper. For this a greater degree of quickness or slowness of parts, education, habit, temper, turn of mind, and a variety of collateral and predisposing causes are necessary to account. The subject is at least curious, and worthy of an attempt to explain it. I shall endeavour to illustrate the difference by familiar examples rather than by analytical reasonings. The philosopher of old was not unwise, who defined motion by getting up and walking.

The great leading distinction between writing and speaking is, that more time is allowed for the one than the other: and hence different faculties are required for, and different objects attained by, each. He is properly the best speaker who can collect together the greatest number of apposite ideas at a moment's warning: he is properly the best writer who can give utterance to the greatest quantity of valuable knowledge in the course of his whole life. The chief requisite for the one, then, appears to be quickness and facility of perception—for the other, patience of soul, and a power increasing with the difficulties it has to master. He cannot be denied to be an expert speaker, a lively companion, who is never at a loss for some-

the rock of ages. The mere exercise of ingenuity in devising a system furnished consolation to its creators, or improvers. Lucretius is a striking example of all this; and it may be averred that down to the time of Claudian, who lived in the fourth century of our æra, in no classical writer of antiquity do there occur any traces of what moderns understand by the restlessness and discomfort of uncertainty, as to the government of the world and the future destinies of man.'—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxx. p. 96, 97, *Article, Childe Harold*, Canto 4.

thing to say on every occasion or subject that offers: he, by the same rule, will make a respectable writer, who, by dint of study, can find out any thing good to say upon any one point that has not been touched upon before, or who, by asking for time, can give the most complete and comprehensive view of any question. The one must be done off-hand, at a single blow: the other can only be done by a repetition of blows, by having time to think and do better. In speaking, less is required of you, if you only do it at once, with grace and spirit: in writing, you stipulate for all that you are capable of, but you have the choice of your own time and subject. You do not expect from the manufacturer the same dispatch in executing an order that you do from the shopkeeper or warehouseman. The difference of *quicker* and *slower*, however, is not all: that is merely a difference of comparison in doing the same thing. But the writer and speaker have to do things essentially different. Besides habit, and greater or less facility, there is also a certain reach of capacity, a certain depth or shallowness, grossness or refinement of intellect, which marks out the distinction between those whose chief ambition is to shine by producing an immediate effect, or who are thrown back, by a natural bias, on the severer researches of thought and study.

We see persons of that standard or texture of mind that they can do nothing, but on the spur of the occasion: if they have time to deliberate, they are lost. There are others who have no resource, who cannot advance a step by any efforts or assistance, beyond a successful arrangement of common-places: but these they have always at command, at every body's service. There is F——; meet him where you will in the street, he has his topic ready to discharge in the same breath with the customary forms of salutation; he is hand and glove with it; on it goes and off, and he manages it like Wart his caliver.

> Hear him but reason in divinity,
> And, all-admiring, with an inward wish
> You would desire that he were made a prelate.
> Let him but talk of any state-affair,
> You 'd say it had been all in all his study.
> Turn him to any cause of policy,
> The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
> Familiar as his garter. When he speaks,
> The air, a charter'd libertine, stands still—

but, ere you have time to answer him, he is off like a shot, to repeat the same rounded, fluent observations to others:—a perfect master of the sentences, a walking polemic wound up for the day, a smartly

bound political pocket-book! Set the same person to write a common paragraph, and he cannot get through it for very weariness: ask him a question, ever so little out of the common road, and he stares you in the face. What does all this bustle, animation, plausibility, and command of words amount to? A lively flow of animal spirits, a good deal of confidence, a communicative turn, and a tolerably tenacious memory with respect to floating opinions and current phrases. Beyond the routine of the daily newspapers and coffee-house criticism, such persons do not venture to think at all: or if they did, it would be so much the worse for them, for they would only be perplexed in the attempt, and would perform their part in the mechanism of society with so much the less alacrity and easy volubility.

The most dashing orator I ever heard is the flattest writer I ever read. In speaking, he was like a volcano vomiting out *lava*; in writing, he is like a volcano burnt out. Nothing but the dry cinders, the hard shell remains. The tongues of flame, with which, in haranguing a mixed assembly, he used to illuminate his subject, and almost scorched up the panting air, do not appear painted on the margin of his works. He was the model of a flashy, powerful demagogue—a madman blessed with a fit audience. He was possessed, infuriated with the patriotic *mania*; he seemed to rend and tear the rotten carcase of corruption with the remorseless, indecent rage of a wild beast: he mourned over the bleeding body of his country, like another Antony over the dead body of Cæsar, as if he would 'move the very stones of Rome to rise and mutiny:' he pointed to the 'Persian abodes, the glittering temples' of oppression and luxury, with prophetic exultation; and, like another Helen, had almost fired another Troy! The lightning of national indignation flashed from his eye; the workings of the popular mind were seen labouring in his bosom: it writhed and swelled with its rank 'fraught of aspics' tongues,' and the poison frothed over at his lips. Thus qualified, he 'wielded at will the fierce democracy, and fulmin'd over' an area of souls, of no mean circumference. He who might be said to have 'roared you in the ears of the groundlings an 'twere any lion, aggravates his voice' on paper, 'like any sucking-dove.' It is not merely that the same individual cannot sit down quietly in his closet, and produce the same, or a correspondent effect—that what he delivers over to the compositor is tame, and trite, and tedious—that he cannot by any means, as it were, 'create a soul under the ribs of death'—but sit down yourself, and read one of these very popular and electrical effusions (for they have been published) and you would not believe it to be the same! The thunder-and-lightning mixture of

the orator turns out a mere drab-coloured suit in the person of the prose-writer. We wonder at the change, and think there must be some mistake, some leger-de-main trick played off upon us, by which what before appeared so fine now appears to be so worthless. The deception took place *before*; now it is removed. 'Bottom! thou art translated!' might be placed as a motto under most collections of printed speeches that I have had the good fortune to meet with, whether originally addressed to the people, the senate, or the bar. Burke's and Windham's form an exception: Mr. Coleridge's *Conciones ad Populum* do not, any more than Mr. Thelwall's *Tribune*. What we read is the same: what we hear and see is different—'the self-same words, but *not* to the self-same tune.' The orator's vehemence of gesture, the loudness of the voice, the speaking eye, the conscious attitude, the inexplicable dumb shew and noise,—all 'those brave sublunary things that made his raptures clear,'—are no longer there, and without these he is nothing;—his 'fire and air' turn to puddle and ditch-water, and the God of eloquence and of our idolatry sinks into a common mortal, or an image of lead, with a few labels, nicknames, and party watch-words stuck in his mouth. The truth is, that these always made up the stock of his intellectual wealth; but a certain exaggeration and extravagance of *manner* covered the nakedness, and swelled out the emptiness of the *matter*: the sympathy of angry multitudes with an impassioned theatrical declaimer supplied the place of argument or wit; while the physical animation and ardour of the speaker evaporated in 'sound and fury, signifying nothing,' and leaving no trace behind it. A popular speaker (such as I have been here describing) is like a vulgar actor off the stage—take away his cue, and he has nothing to say for himself. Or he is so accustomed to the intoxication of popular applause, that without that stimulus he has no motive or power of exertion left—neither imagination, understanding, liveliness, common sense, words or ideas—he is fairly cleared out; and in the intervals of sober reason, is the dullest and most imbecil of all mortals.

An orator can hardly get beyond *common-places*: if he does, he gets beyond his hearers. The most successful speakers, even in the House of Commons, have not been the best scholars or the finest writers—neither those who took the most profound views of their subject, nor who adorned it with the most original fancy, or the richest combinations of language. Those speeches that in general told best at the time, are not now readable. What were the materials of which they were chiefly composed? An imposing detail of passing events, a formal display of official documents, an appeal to established maxims, an echo of popular clamour, some worn-out

metaphor newly vamped-up,—some hackneyed argument used for the hundredth, nay thousandth, time, to fall in with the interests, the passions, or prejudices of listening and devoted admirers;—some truth or falsehood, repeated as the Shibboleth of party time out of mind, which gathers strength from sympathy as it spreads, because it is understood or assented to by the million, and finds, in the increased action of the minds of numbers, the weight and force of an instinct. A COMMON-PLACE does not leave the mind 'sceptical, puzzled, and undecided in the moment of action:'—'it gives a body to opinion, and a permanence to fugitive belief.' It operates mechanically, and opens an instantaneous and infallible communication between the hearer and speaker. A set of cant-phrases, arranged in sounding sentences, and pronounced 'with good emphasis and discretion,' keep the gross and irritable humours of an audience in constant fermentation; and levy no tax on the understanding. To give a reason for any thing is to breed a doubt of it, which doubt you may not remove in the sequel; either because your reason may not be a good one, or because the person to whom it is addressed may not be able to comprehend it, or because *others* may not be able to comprehend it. He who offers to go into the grounds of an acknowledged axiom, risks the unanimity of the company 'by most admired disorder,' as he who digs to the foundation of a building to shew its solidity, risks its falling. But a common-place is enshrined in its own unquestioned evidence, and constitutes its own immortal basis. Nature, it has been said, abhors a vacuum; and the House of Commons, it might be said, hates every thing but a common-place!—Mr. Burke did not often shock the prejudices of the House: he endeavoured to *account for them*, to 'lay the flattering unction' of philosophy 'to their souls.' They could not endure him. Yet he did not attempt this by dry argument alone: he called to his aid the flowers of poetical fiction, and strewed the most dazzling colours of language over the Standing Orders of the House. It was a double offence to them—an aggravation of the encroachments of his genius. They would rather 'hear a cat mew or an axle-tree grate,' than hear a man talk philosophy by the hour—

> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
> Where no crude surfeit reigns.

He was emphatically called the *Dinner-Bell*. They went out by shoals when he began to speak. They coughed and shuffled him down. While he was uttering some of the finest observations (to

speak in compass) that ever were delivered in that House, they walked out, not as the beasts came out of the ark, by twos and by threes, but in droves and companies of tens, of dozens, and scores! Oh! it is 'the heaviest stone which melancholy can throw at a man,' when you are in the middle of a delicate speculation to see 'a robusteous, periwig-pated fellow' deliberately take up his hat and walk out. But what effect could Burke's finest observations be expected to have on the House of Commons in their corporate capacity? On the supposition that they were original, refined, comprehensive, his auditors had never heard, and assuredly they had never thought of them before: how then should they know that they were good or bad, till they had time to consider better of it, or till they were told what to think? In the mean time, their effect would be to stop the question: they were blanks in the debate: they could at best only be laid aside and left *ad referendum*. What would it signify if four or five persons, at the utmost, felt their full force and fascinating power the instant they were delivered? They would be utterly unintelligible to nine-tenths of the persons present, and their impression upon any particular individual, more knowing than the rest, would be involuntarily paralysed by the torpedo touch of the elbow of a country-gentleman or city-orator. There is a reaction in insensibility as well as in enthusiasm; and men in society judge not by their own convictions, but by sympathy with others. In reading, we may go over the page again, whenever any thing new or questionable 'gives us pause:' besides, we are by ourselves, and it is *a word to the wise*. We are not afraid of understanding too much, and being called upon to unriddle. In hearing we are (saving the mark!) in the company of fools; and time presses. Was the debate to be suspended while Mr. Fox or Mr. Windham took this or that Honourable Member aside, to explain to them *that fine observation* of Mr. Burke's, and to watch over the new birth of their understandings, the dawn of this new light! If we were to wait till Noble Lords and Honourable Gentlemen were inspired with a relish for abstruse thinking, and a taste for the loftier flights of fancy, the business of this great nation would shortly be at a stand. No: it is too much to ask that our good things should be duly appreciated by the first person we meet, or in the next minute after their disclosure; if the world are a little, a very little, the wiser or better for them a century hence, it is full as much as can be modestly expected!—The impression of any thing delivered in a large assembly must be comparatively null and void, unless you not only understand and feel its value yourself, but are conscious that it is felt and understood by the meanest capacity present. Till that is the case, the speaker is in your power, not you in his. The eloquence that is

effectual and irresistible must stir the inert mass of prejudice, and pierce the opaquest shadows of ignorance. Corporate bodies move slow in the progress of intellect, for this reason, that they must keep back, like convoys, for the heaviest sailing vessels under their charge. The sinews of the wisest councils are, after all, impudence and interest: the most enlightened bodies are often but slaves of the weakest intellects they reckon among them, and the best-intentioned are but tools of the greatest hypocrites and knaves.—To conclude what I had to say on the character of Mr. Burke's parliamentary style, I will just give an instance of what I mean in affirming that it was too recondite for his hearers; and it shall be even in so obvious a thing as a quotation. Speaking of the new-fangled French Constitution, and in particular of the King (Louis XVI.) as the chief power in form and appearance only, he repeated the famous lines in Milton describing Death, and concluded with peculiar emphasis,

——What *seem'd* its head,
The *likeness* of a kingly crown had on.

The person who heard him make the speech said, that, if ever a poet's language had been finely applied by an orator to express his thoughts and make out his purpose, it was in this instance. The passage, I believe, is not in his reported speeches; and I should think, in all likelihood, it 'fell still-born' from his lips; while one of Mr. Canning's well-thumbed quotations out of Virgil would electrify the Treasury Benches, and be echoed by all the politicians of his own standing, and the tyros of his own school, from Lord Liverpool in the Upper down to Mr. William Ward in the Lower House.

Mr. Burke was an author before he was a Member of Parliament: he ascended to that practical eminence from 'the platform' of his literary pursuits. He walked out of his study into the House. But he never became a thorough-bred debater. He was not 'native to that element,' nor was he ever 'subdued to the quality' of that motley crew of knights, citizens, and burgesses. The late Lord Chatham was made for, and by it. He seemed to vault into his seat there, like Hotspur, with the exclamation in his mouth—'that Roan shall be my throne.' Or he sprang out of the genius of the House of Commons, like Pallas from the head of Jupiter, completely armed. He assumed an ascendancy there from the very port and stature of his mind—from his aspiring and fiery temperament. He vanquished because he could not yield. He controlled the purposes of others, because he was strong in his own obdurate self-will. He convinced his followers, by never doubting himself. He did not

argue, but assert; he took what he chose for granted, instead of making a question of it. He was not a dealer in *moot-points*. He seized on some strong-hold in the argument, and held it fast with a convulsive grasp—or wrested the weapons out of his adversaries' hands by main force. He entered the lists like a gladiator. He made political controversy a combat of personal skill and courage. He was not for wasting time in long-winded discussions with his opponents, but tried to disarm them by a word, by a glance of his eye, so that they should not dare to contradict or confront him again. He did not wheedle, or palliate, or circumvent, or make a studied appeal to the reason or the passions—he *dictated* his opinions to the House of Commons. 'He spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.'—But if he did not produce such an effect either by reason or imagination, how did he produce it? The principle by which he exerted his influence over others (and it is a principle of which some speakers that I might mention seem not to have an idea, even in possibility) was sympathy. He himself evidently had a strong possession of his subject, a thorough conviction, an intense interest; and this communicated itself from his *manner*, from the tones of his voice, from his commanding attitudes, and eager gestures, instinctively and unavoidably to his hearers. His will was surcharged with electrical matter like a Voltaic battery; and all who stood within its reach felt the full force of the shock. Zeal will do more than knowledge. To say the truth, there is little knowledge,—no ingenuity, no parade of individual details, not much attempt at general argument, neither wit nor fancy in his speeches—but there are a few plain truths told home: whatever he says, he does not mince the matter, but clenches it in the most unequivocal manner, and with the fullest sense of its importance, in clear, short, pithy, old English sentences. The most obvious things, as he puts them, read like axioms—so that he appears, as it were, the genius of common sense personified; and in turning to his speeches you fancy that you have met with (at least) one honest statesman!—Lord Chatham commenced his career in the intrigues of a camp and the bustle of a mess-room; where he probably learnt that the way to govern others, is to make your will your warrant, and your word a law. If he had spent the early part of his life, like Mr. Burke, in writing a treatise on the *Sublime and Beautiful*, and in dreaming over the abstract nature and causes of things, he would never have taken the lead he did in the British Senate.

Both Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt (though as opposite to each other as possible) were essentially speakers, not authors, in their mode of oratory. Beyond the moment, beyond the occasion, beyond the



Tooke failed, with all his tact, his self-possession, his ready talent, and his long practice at the hustings. He had weapons of his own, with which he wished to make play, and did not lay his hand upon the established levers for wielding the House of Commons. A succession of dry, sharp-pointed sayings, which come in excellently well in the pauses or quick turns of conversation, do not make a speech. A series of drops is not a stream. Besides, he had been in the practice of rallying his guests and tampering with his subject; and this ironical tone did not suit his new situation. He had been used to 'give his own little Senate laws,' and when he found the resistance of the great one more than he could manage, he shrunk back from the attempt, disheartened and powerless. It is nothing that a man can talk (the better, the worse it is for him) unless he can talk in trammels; he must be drilled into the regiment; he must not run out of the course! The worst thing a man can do is to set up for a wit there—or rather (I should say) for a humourist—to say odd out-of-the-way things, to ape a character, to play the clown or the wag in the House. This is the very forlorn hope of a parliamentary ambition. They may tolerate it till they know what you are at, but no longer. It may succeed once or twice, but the third time you will be sure to break your neck. They know nothing of you, or your whims, nor have they time to look at a puppet-show. 'They look only at the stop-watch, my Lord!' We have seen a very lively sally of this sort which failed lately. The House of Commons is the last place where a man will draw admiration by making a jest of his own character. But if he has a mind to make a jest of humanity, of liberty, and of common sense and decency, he will succeed well enough!

The only person who ever 'hit the House between wind and water' in this way,—who made sport for the Members, and kept his own dignity (in our time at least), was Mr. Windham. He carried on the traffic in parliamentary conundrums and enigmas with great *éclat* for more than one season. He mixed up a vein of characteristic eccentricity with a succession of far-fetched and curious speculations, very pleasantly. Extremes meet; and Mr. Windham overcame the obstinate attachment of his hearers to fixed opinions by the force of paradoxes. He startled his bed-rid audience effectually. A paradox was a treat to them, on the score of novelty at least; 'the sight of one,' according to the Scotch proverb, 'was good for sore eyes.' So Mr. Windham humoured them in the thing for once. He took all sorts of commonly received doctrines and notions (with an understood reserve)—reversed them, and set up a fanciful theory of his own, instead. The changes were like those in a pantomime. Ask the

first old woman you met her opinion on any subject, and you could get at the statesman's; for his would be just the contrary. He would be wiser than the old woman at any rate. If a thing had been thought cruel, he would prove that it was humane; if barbarous, manly; if wise, foolish; if sense, nonsense. His creed was the antithesis of common sense, loyalty excepted. Economy he could turn into ridicule, 'as a saving of cheese-parings and candle-ends';—and total failure was with him 'negative success.' He had no occasion, in thus setting up for original thinking, to inquire into the truth or falsehood of any proposition, but to ascertain whether it was currently believed in, and then to contradict it point-blank. He made the vulgar prejudices of others 'servile ministers' to his own solecisms. It was not easy always to say whether he was in jest or earnest—but he contrived to hitch his extravagances into the midst of some grave debate; the House had their laugh for nothing; the question got into shape again, and Mr. Windham was allowed to have been more *brilliant* than ever.[1]

Mr. Windham was, I have heard, a silent man in company. Indeed his whole style was an artificial and studied imitation, or capricious caricature of Burke's bold, natural, discursive manner. This did not imply much spontaneous power or fertility of invention; he was an intellectual posture-master, rather than a man of real elasticity and vigour of mind. Mr. Pitt was also, I believe, somewhat taciturn and reserved. There was nothing clearly in the subject-matter of his speeches to connect with the ordinary topics of discourse, or with any given aspect of human life. One would expect him to be quite as much in the clouds as the automaton chess-player, or the last new Opera-singer. Mr. Fox said little in private, and complained that in writing he had no style. So (to compare great things with small) Jack Davies, the unrivalled racket-player, never said any thing at all in company, and was what is understood by a modest man. When the racket was out of his hand, his occupation, his delight, his glory, (that which he excelled all mankind in) was gone! So when Mr. Fox had no longer to keep up the ball of debate, with the floor of Saint Stephen's for a stage, and the world for spectators of the game, it is hardly to be wondered at that he felt a little at a loss—without his usual train of subjects, the same crowd

[1] It must be granted, however, that there was something *piquant* and provoking in his manner of 'making the worse appear the better reason.' In keeping off the ill odour of a bad cause, he applied hartshorn and burnt feathers to the offended sense; and did not, like Mr. Canning, treat us with the faded flowers of his oratory, like the faint smell of a perfumer's shop, or try to make Government 'love-locks' of dead men's hair!

of associations, the same spirit of competition, or stimulus to extraordinary exertion. The excitement of leading in the House of Commons (which, in addition to the immediate attention and applause that follows, is a sort of whispering gallery to all Europe) must act upon the brain like brandy or laudanum upon the stomach; and must, in most cases, produce the same debilitating effects afterwards. A man's faculties must be quite exhausted, his virtue gone out of him. That any one accustomed all his life to the tributary roar of applause from the great council of the nation, should think of dieting himself with the prospect of posthumous fame as an author, is like offering a confirmed dram-drinker a glass of fair water for his morning's draught. Charles Fox is not to be blamed for having written an indifferent history of James II. but for having written a history at all. It was not his business to write a history—his business was *not to have made any more Coalitions!* But he found writing so dull, he thought it better to be a colleague of Lord Grenville! He did not want style (to say so is nonsense, because the style of his speeches was just and fine)—he wanted a sounding-board in the ear of posterity to try his periods upon. If he had gone to the House of Commons in the morning, and tried to make a speech fasting, when there was nobody to hear him, he might have been equally disconcerted at his want of style. The habit of speaking is the habit of being heard, and of wanting to be heard; the habit of writing is the habit of thinking aloud, but without the help of an echo. The orator sees his subject in the eager looks of his auditors; and feels doubly conscious, doubly impressed with it in the glow of their sympathy; the author can only look for encouragement in a blank piece of paper. The orator feels the impulse of popular enthusiasm,

—— like proud seas under him:

the only Pegasus the writer has to boast, is the hobby-horse of his own thoughts and fancies. How is he to get on then? From the lash of necessity. We accordingly see persons of rank and fortune continually volunteer into the service of oratory—and the State; but we have few authors who are not paid by the sheet!—I myself have heard Charles Fox engaged in familiar conversation. It was in the Louvre. He was describing the pictures to two persons that were with him. He spoke rapidly, but very unaffectedly. I remember his saying—'All those blues and greens and reds are the Guercinos; you may know them by the colours.' He set Opie right as to Domenichino's Saint Jerome. 'You will find,' he said, 'though you may not be struck with it at first, that there is a great deal of truth and good sense in that picture.' There was a person at one

time a good deal with Mr. Fox, who, when the opinion of the latter was asked on any subject, very frequently interposed to give the answer. This sort of tantalizing interruption was ingeniously enough compared by some one, to walking up Ludgate-hill, and having the spire of St. Martin's constantly getting in your way, when you wish to see the dome of St. Paul's!—Burke, it is said, conversed as he spoke in public, and as he wrote. He was communicative, diffuse, magnificent. 'What is the use,' said Mr. Fox to a friend, 'of Sheridan's trying to swell himself out in this manner, like the frog in the fable?'—alluding to his speech on Warren Hastings's trial. 'It is very well for Burke to express himself in that figurative way. It is natural to him; he talks so to his wife, to his servants, to his children; but as for Sheridan, he either never opens his mouth at all, or if he does, it is to utter some joke. It is out of the question for him to affect these *Orientalisms*.' Burke once came into Sir Joshua Reynolds's painting-room, when one of his pupils was sitting for one of the sons of Count Ugolino; this gentleman was personally introduced to him;—'Ah! then,' said Burke, 'I find that Mr. N—— has not only a head that would do for Titian to paint, but is himself a painter.' At another time, he came in when Goldsmith was there, and poured forth such a torrent of violent personal abuse against the King, that they got to high words, and Goldsmith threatened to leave the room if he did not desist. Goldsmith bore testimony to his powers of conversation. Speaking of Johnson, he said, 'Does he wind into a subject like a serpent, as Burke does?' With respect to his facility in composition, there are contradictory accounts. It has been stated by some, that he wrote out a plain sketch first, like a sort of dead colouring, and added the ornaments and tropes afterwards. I have been assured by a person who had the best means of knowing, that the *Letter to a Noble Lord* (the most rapid, impetuous, glancing, and sportive of all his works) was printed off, and the proof sent to him: and that it was returned to the printing-office with so many alterations and passages interlined, that the compositors refused to correct it as it was—took the whole matter in pieces, and re-set the copy. This looks like elaboration and after-thought. It was also one of Burke's latest compositions.[1] A regularly bred speaker would have made up his mind beforehand; but Burke's mind being, as originally constituted and by its first bias, that of an author, never became set. It was in further search and progress. It had an internal spring left.

[1] Tom Paine, while he was busy about any of his works, used to walk out, compose a sentence or paragraph in his head, come home and write it down, and never altered it afterwards. He then added another, and so on, till the whole was completed.

It was not tied down to the printer's form. It could still project itself into new beauties, and explore strange regions from the unwearied impulse of its own delight or curiosity. Perhaps among the passages interlined, in this case, were the description of the Duke of Bedford, as 'the Leviathan among all the creatures of the crown,'—the *catalogue raisonnée* of the Abbé Sieyes's pigeon-holes,—or the comparison of the English Monarchy to 'the proud keep of Windsor, with its double belt of kindred and coeval towers.' Were these to be given up? If he had had to make his defence of his pension in the House of Lords, they would not have been ready in time, it appears; and, besides, would have been too difficult of execution on the spot: a speaker must not set his heart on such forbidden fruit. But Mr. Burke was an author, and the press did not 'shut the gates of *genius* on mankind.' A set of oratorical flourishes, indeed, is soon exhausted, and is generally all that the extempore speaker can safely aspire to. Not so with the resources of art or nature, which are inexhaustible, and which the writer has time to seek out, to embody, and to fit into shape and use, if he has the strength, the courage, and patience to do so.

There is then a certain range of thought and expression beyond the regular rhetorical routine, on which the author, to vindicate his title, must trench somewhat freely. The proof that this is understood to be so, is, that what is called an oratorical style is exploded from all good writing; that we immediately lay down an article, even in a common newspaper, in which such phrases occur as 'the Angel of Reform,' 'the drooping Genius of Albion;' and that a very brilliant speech at a loyal dinner-party makes a very flimsy, insipid pamphlet. The orator has to get up for a certain occasion a striking compilation of partial topics, which, 'to leave no rubs or botches in the work,' must be pretty familiar, as well as palatable to his hearers; and in doing this, he may avail himself of all the resources of an artificial memory. The writer must be original, or he is nothing. He is not to take up with ready-made goods; for he has time allowed him to create his own materials, to make novel combinations of thought and fancy, to contend with unforeseen difficulties of style and execution, while we look on, and admire the growing work in secret and at leisure. There is a degree of finishing as well as of solid strength in writing, which is not to be got at every day, and we can wait for perfection. The author owes a debt to truth and nature which he cannot satisfy at sight, but he has pawned his head on redeeming it. It is not a string of clap-traps to answer a temporary or party-purpose, —violent, vulgar, and illiberal,—but general and lasting truth that we require at his hands. We go to him as pupils, not as partisans. We

have a right to expect from him profounder views of things; finer observations; more ingenious illustrations; happier and bolder expressions. He is to give the choice and picked results of a whole life of study; what he has struck out in his most felicitous moods, has treasured up with most pride, has laboured to bring to light with most anxiety and confidence of success. He may turn a period in his head fifty different ways, so that it comes out smooth and round at last. He may have caught a glimpse of a simile, and it may have vanished again: let him be on the watch for it, as the idle boy watches for the lurking-place of the adder. We can wait. He is not satisfied with a reason he has offered for something; let him wait till he finds a better reason. There is some word, some phrase, some idiom that expresses a particular idea better than any other, but he cannot for the life of him recollect it: let him wait till he does. Is it strange that among twenty thousand words in the English language, the one of all others that he most needs should have escaped him? There are more things in nature than there are words in the English language, and he must not expect to lay rash hands on them all at once.

Learn to *write* slow: all other graces
Will follow in their proper places.

You allow a writer a year to think of a subject; he should not put you off with a truism at last. You allow him a year more to find out words for his thoughts; he should not give us an echo of all the fine things that have been said a hundred times.[1] All authors, however, are not so squeamish; but take up with words and ideas as they find them delivered down to them. Happy are they who write Latin verses! Who copy the style of Dr. Johnson! Who hold up the phrase of ancient Pistol! They do not trouble themselves with those hair-breadth distinctions of thought or meaning that puzzle nicer heads—let us leave them to their repose! A person in habits of composition often hesitates in conversation for a particular word: it is because he is in search of the best word, and *that* he cannot hit upon. In writing he would stop till it came.[2] It is not true, however, that the scholar could avail himself of a more ordinary word if he chose, or readily acquire a command of ordinary language; for his associations are habitually intense, not vague and shallow; and words occur to him only as *tallies* to certain modifications of feeling. They are

[1] Just as a poet ought not to cheat us with lame metre and defective rhymes, which might be excusable in an improvisatori versifier.

[2] That is essentially a bad style which seems as if the person writing it never stopped for breath, nor gave himself a moment's pause, but strove to make up by redundancy and fluency for want of choice and correctness of expression.

links in the chain of thought. His imagination is fastidious, and rejects all those that are 'of no mark or likelihood.' Certain words are in his mind indissolubly wedded to certain things; and none are admitted at the *levée* of his thoughts, but those of which the banns have been solemnised with scrupulous propriety. Again, the student finds a stimulus to literary exertion, not in the immediate *éclat* of his undertaking, but in the difficulty of his subject, and the progressive nature of his task. He is not wound up to a sudden and extraordinary effort of presence of mind; but is for ever awake to the silent influxes of things, and his life is one long labour. Are there no sweeteners of his toil? No reflections, in the absence of popular applause or social indulgence, to cheer him on his way? Let the reader judge. *His* pleasure is the counterpart of, and borrowed from the same source as the writer's. A man does not read out of vanity, nor in company, but to amuse his own thoughts. If the reader, from disinterested and merely intellectual motives, relishes an author's 'fancies and good nights,' the last may be supposed to have relished them no less. If he laughs at a joke, the inventor chuckled over it to the full as much. If he is delighted with a phrase, he may be sure the writer jumped at it; if he is pleased to cull a straggling flower from the page, he may believe that it was plucked with no less fondness from the face of nature. Does he fasten, with gathering brow and looks intent, on some difficult speculation? He may be convinced that the writer thought it a fine thing to split his brain in solving so curious a problem, and to publish his discovery to the world. There is some satisfaction in the contemplation of power; there is also a little pride in the conscious possession of it. With what pleasure do we read books! If authors could but feel this, or remember what they themselves once felt, they would need no other temptation to persevere.

To conclude this account with what perhaps I ought to have set out with, a definition of the character of an author. There are persons who in society, in public intercourse, feel no excitement,

'Dull as the lake that slumbers in the storm,'

but who, when left alone, can lash themselves into a foam. They are never less alone than when alone. Mount them on a dinner-table, and they have nothing to say; shut them up in a room by themselves, and they are inspired. They are 'made fierce with dark keeping.' In revenge for being tongue-tyed, a torrent of words flows from their pens, and the storm which was so long collecting comes down apace. It never rains but it pours. Is not this strange, unaccountable? Not at all so. They have a real interest, a real

knowledge of the subject, and they cannot summon up all that interest, or bring all that knowledge to bear, while they have any thing else to attend to. Till they can do justice to the feeling they have, they can do nothing. For this they look into their own minds, not in the faces of a gaping multitude. What they would say (if they could) does not lie at the orifices of the mouth ready for delivery, but is wrapped in the folds of the heart and registered in the chambers of the brain. In the sacred cause of truth that stirs them, they would put their whole strength, their whole being into requisition; and as it implies a greater effort to drag their words and ideas from their lurking-places, so there is no end when they are once set in motion. The whole of a man's thoughts and feelings cannot lie on the surface, made up for use; but the whole must be a greater quantity, a mightier power, if they could be got at, layer under layer, and brought into play by the levers of imagination and reflection. Such a person then sees farther and feels deeper than most others. He plucks up an argument by the roots, he tears out the very heart of his subject. He has more pride in conquering the difficulties of a question, than vanity in courting the favour of an audience. He wishes to satisfy himself before he pretends to enlighten the public. He takes an interest in things in the abstract more than by common consent. Nature is his mistress, truth his idol. The contemplation of a pure idea is the ruling passion of his breast. The intervention of other people's notions, the being the immediate object of their censure or their praise, puts him out. What will tell, what will produce an effect, he cares little about; and therefore he produces the greatest. The *personal* is to him an impertinence; so he conceals himself and writes. Solitude 'becomes his glittering bride, and airy thoughts his children.' Such a one is a true author; and not a member of any Debating Club, or Dilettanti Society whatever![1]

[1] I have omitted to dwell on some other differences of body and mind that often prevent the same person from shining in both capacities of speaker and writer. There are natural impediments to public speaking, such as the want of a strong voice and steady nerves. A high authority of the present day (Mr. Canning) has thought this a matter of so much importance, that he goes so far as even to let it affect the constitution of Parliament, and conceives that gentlemen who have not bold foreheads and brazen lungs, but modest pretensions and patriotic views, should be allowed to creep into the great assembly of the nation through the avenue of close boroughs, and not be called upon 'to face the storms of the hustings.' In this point of view, Stentor was a man of genius, and a noisy jack-pudding may cut a considerable figure in the 'Political House that Jack built.' I fancy Mr. C. Wynne is the only person in the kingdom who has fully made up his mind that a total defect of voice is the most necessary qualification for a Speaker of the House of Commons!

ESSAY XXV

ON A PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISH LADY, BY VANDYKE

The portrait I speak of is in the Louvre, where it is numbered 416, and the only account of it in the *Catalogue* is that of a *Lady and her daughter*. It is companion to another whole-length by the same artist, No. 417, of a *Gentleman and a little girl*. Both are evidently English.

The face of the lady has nothing very remarkable in it, but that it may be said to be the very perfection of the English female face. It is not particularly beautiful, but there is a sweetness in it, and a goodness conjoined, which is inexpressibly delightful. The smooth ivory forehead is a little ruffled, as if some slight cause of uneasiness, like a cloud, had just passed over it. The eyes are raised with a look of timid attention; the mouth is compressed with modest sensibility; the complexion is delicate and clear; and over the whole figure (which is seated) there reign the utmost propriety and decorum. The habitual gentleness of the character seems to have been dashed with some anxious thought or momentary disquiet, and, like the shrinking flower, in whose leaves the lucid drop yet trembles, looks out and smiles at the storm that is overblown. A mother's tenderness, a mother's fear, appears to flutter on the surface, and on the extreme verge of the expression, and not to have quite subsided into thoughtless indifference or mild composure. There is a reflection of the same expression in the little child at her knee, who turns her head round with a certain appearance of constraint and innocent wonder; and perhaps it is the difficulty of getting her to sit (or to sit still) that has caused the transient contraction of her mother's brow,—that lovely, unstained mirror of pure affection, too fair, too delicate, too soft and feminine for the breath of serious misfortune ever to come near, or not to crush it. It is a face, in short, of the greatest purity and sensibility, sweetness and simplicity, or such as Chaucer might have described

'Where all is conscience and tender heart.'

I have said that it is an English face; and I may add (without being invidious) that it is not a French one. I will not say that they have no face to equal this; of that I am not a judge; but I am sure they have no face equal to this, in the qualities by which it is distinguished. They may have faces as amiable, but then the

possessors of them will be conscious of it. There may be equal elegance, but not the same ease; there may be even greater intelligence, but without the innocence; more vivacity, but then it will run into petulance or coquetry; in short, there may be every other good quality but a total absence of all pretension to or wish to make a display of it, but the same unaffected modesty and simplicity. In French faces (and I have seen some that were charming both for the features and expression) there is a varnish of insincerity, a something theatrical or meretricious; but here, every particle is pure to the 'last recesses of the mind.' The face (such as it is, and it has a considerable share both of beauty and meaning) is without the smallest alloy of affectation. There is no false glitter in the eyes to make them look brighter; no little wrinkles about the corners of the eye-lids, the effect of self-conceit; no pursing up of the mouth, no significant leer, no primness, no extravagance, no assumed levity or gravity. You have the genuine text of nature without gloss or comment. There is no heightening of conscious charms to produce greater effect, no studying of airs and graces in the glass of vanity. You have not the remotest hint of the milliner, the dancing-master, the dealer in paints and patches. You have before you a real English lady of the seventeenth century, who looks like one, because she cannot look otherwise; whose expression of sweetness, intelligence, or concern is just what is natural to her, and what the occasion requires; whose entire demeanour is the emanation of her habitual sentiments and disposition, and who is as free from guile or affectation as the little child by her side. I repeat that this is not the distinguishing character of the French physiognomy, which, at its best, is often spoiled by a consciousness of what it is, and a restless desire to be something more.

Goodness of disposition, with a clear complexion and handsome features, is the chief ingredient in English beauty. There is a great difference in this respect between Vandyke's portraits of women and Titian's, of which we may find examples in the Louvre. The picture, which goes by the name of his *Mistress*, is one of the most celebrated of the latter. The neck of this picture is like a broad crystal mirror; and the hair which she holds so carelessly in her hand is like meshes of beaten gold. The eyes which roll in their ample sockets, like two shining orbs, and which are turned away from the spectator, only dart their glances the more powerfully into the soul; and the whole picture is a paragon of frank cordial grace, and transparent brilliancy of colouring. Her tight boddice compresses her full but finely proportioned waist; while the tucker in part conceals and almost clasps the snowy bosom. But you never

think of any thing beyond the personal attractions, and a certain sparkling intelligence. She is not marble, but a fine piece of animated clay. There is none of that retired and shrinking character, that modesty of demeanour, that sensitive delicacy, that starts even at the shadow of evil—that are so evidently to be traced in the portrait by Vandyke. Still there is no positive vice, no meanness, no hypocrisy, but an unconstrained elastic spirit of self-enjoyment, more bent on the end than scrupulous about the means; with firmly braced nerves, and a tincture of vulgarity. She is not like an English lady, nor like a lady at all; but she is a very fine servant-girl, conscious of her advantages, and willing to make the most of them. In fact, Titian's *Mistress* answers exactly, I conceive, to the idea conveyed by the English word, *sweetheart*.—The Marchioness of Guasto is a fairer comparison. She is by the supposition a lady, but still an Italian one. There is a honeyed richness about the texture of the skin, and her air is languid from a sense of pleasure. Her dress, though modest, has the marks of studied coquetry about it; it touches the very limits which it dares not pass; and her eyes which are bashful and downcast, do not seem to droop under the fear of observation, but to retire from the gaze of kindled admiration,

——'As if they thrill'd
Frail hearts, yet quenched not!'

One might say, with Othello, of the hand with which she holds the globe that is offered to her acceptance——

————'This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and pray'r,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here 's a young and *melting* devil here,
That commonly rebels.'

The hands of Vandyke's portrait have the purity and coldness of marble. The colour of the face is such as might be breathed upon it by the refreshing breeze; that of the Marchioness of Guasto's is like the glow it might imbibe from a golden sunset. The expression in the English lady springs from her duties and her affections; that of the Italian Countess inclines more to her ease and pleasures. The Marchioness of Guasto was one of three sisters, to whom, it is said, the inhabitants of Pisa proposed to pay divine honours, in the manner that beauty was worshipped by the fabulous enthusiasts of old. Her husband seems to have participated in the common infatuation, from the fanciful homage that is paid to her in this allegorical composition; and if she was at all intoxicated by the incense offered to her vanity,

the painter must be allowed to have 'qualified' the expression of it 'very craftily.'

I pass on to another female face and figure, that of the Virgin, in the beautiful picture of the *Presentation in the Temple*, by Guido. The expression here is *ideal*, and has a reference to visionary objects and feelings. It is marked by an abstraction from outward impressions, a downcast look, an elevated brow, an absorption of purpose, a stillness and resignation, that become the person and the scene in which she is engaged. The colour is pale or gone; so that purified from every grossness, dead to worldly passions, she almost seems like a statue kneeling. With knees bent, and hands uplifted, her motionless figure appears supported by a soul within, all whose thoughts, from the low ground of humility, tend heavenward. We find none of the triumphant buoyancy of health and spirit as in the *Titian's Mistress*, nor the luxurious softness of the portrait of the Marchioness of Guasto, nor the flexible, tremulous sensibility, nor the anxious attention to passing circumstances, nor the familiar look of the lady by Vandyke; on the contrary, there is a complete unity and concentration of expression, the whole is wrought up and moulded into one intense feeling, but that feeling fixed on objects remote, refined, and etherial as the form of the fair supplicant. A still greater contrast to this internal, or as it were, *introverted* expression, is to be found in the group of female heads by the same artist, Guido, in his picture of the *Flight of Paris and Helen*. They are the three last heads on the left-hand side of the picture. They are thrown into every variety of attitude, as if to take the heart by surprise at every avenue. A tender warmth is suffused over their faces; their head-dresses are airy and fanciful, their complexion sparkling and glossy; their features seem to catch pleasure from every surrounding object, and to reflect it back again. Vanity, beauty, gaiety glance from their conscious looks and wreathed smiles, like the changing colours from the ring-dove's neck. To sharpen the effect and point the moral, they are accompanied by a little negro-boy, who holds up the train of elegance, fashion, and voluptuous grace!

Guido was the 'genteelest' of painters; he was a poetical Vandyke. The latter could give, with inimitable and perfect skill, the airs and graces of people of fashion under their daily and habitual aspects, or as he might see them in a looking-glass. The former saw them in his 'mind's eye,' and could transform them into supposed characters and imaginary situations. Still the elements were the same. Vandyke gave them with the *mannerism* of habit and the individual details; Guido, as they were rounded into grace and

smoothness by the breath of fancy, and borne along by the tide of sentiment. Guido did not want the *ideal* faculty, though he wanted strength and variety. There is an effeminacy about his pictures, for he gave only the different modifications of beauty. It was the Goddess that inspired him, the Siren that seduced him; and whether as saint or sinner, was equally welcome to him. His creations are as frail as they are fair. They all turn on a passion for beauty, and without this support, are nothing. He could paint beauty combined with pleasure or sweetness, or grief, or devotion; but unless it were the ground-work and the primary condition of his performance, he became insipid, ridiculous, and extravagant. There is one thing to be said in his favour; he knew his own powers or followed his own inclinations; and the delicacy of his *tact* in general prevented him from attempting subjects uncongenial with it. He 'trod the primrose path of dalliance,' with equal prudence and modesty. That he is a little monotonous and tame, is all that can be said against him; and he seldom went out of his way to expose his deficiencies in a glaring point of view. He came round to subjects of beauty at last, or gave them that turn. A story is told of his having painted a very lovely head of a girl, and being asked from whom he had taken it, he replied, 'From his old man!' This is not unlikely. He is the only great painter (except Correggio) who appears constantly to have subjected what he saw to an imaginary standard. His Magdalens are more beautiful than sorrowful; in his Madonnas there is more of sweetness and modesty than of elevation. He makes but little difference between his heroes and his heroines; his angels are women, and his women angels! If it be said that he repeated himself too often, and has painted too many Magdalens and Madonnas, I can only say in answer, 'Would he had painted twice as many!' If Guido wanted compass and variety in his art, it signifies little, since what he wanted is abundantly supplied by others. He had softness, delicacy and *ideal* grace in a supreme degree, and his fame rests on these as the cloud on the rock. It is to the highest point of excellence in any art or department that we look back with gratitude and admiration, as it is the highest mountain-peak that we catch in the distance, and lose sight of only when it turns to air.

I know of no other difference between Raphael and Guido, than that the one was twice the man the other was. Raphael was a bolder genius, and invented according to nature: Guido only made draughts after his own disposition and character. There is a common cant of criticism which makes Titian merely a colourist. What he really wanted was invention: he had expression in the highest degree. I declare I have seen heads of his with more meaning in them than any

of Raphael's. But he fell short of Raphael in this, that (except in one or two instances) he could not heighten and adapt the expression that he saw to different and more striking circumstances. He gave more of what he saw than any other painter that ever lived, and in the imitative part of his art had a more universal genius than Raphael had in composition and invention. Beyond the actual and habitual look of nature, however, 'the demon that he served' deserted him, or became a very tame one. Vandyke gave more of the general air and manners of fashionable life than of individual character; and the subjects that he treated are neither remarkable for intellect nor passion. They are people of polished manners, and placid constitutions; and many of the very best of them are 'stupidly good.' Titian's portraits, on the other hand, frequently present a much more formidable than inviting appearance. You would hardly trust yourself in a room with them. You do not bestow a cold, leisurely approbation on them, but look to see what they may be thinking of you, not without some apprehension for the result. They have not the clear smooth skins or the even pulse that Vandyke's seem to possess. They are, for the most part, fierce, wary, voluptuous, subtle, haughty. Raphael painted Italian faces as well as Titian. But he threw into them a character of intellect rather than of temperament. In Titian the irritability takes the lead, sharpens and gives direction to the understanding. There seems to be a personal controversy between the spectator and the individual whose portrait he contemplates, which shall be master of the other. I may refer to two portraits in the Louvre, the one by Raphael, the other by Titian (Nos. 1153 and 1210), in illustration of these remarks. I do not know two finer or more characteristic specimens of these masters, each in its way. The one is of a student dressed in black, absorbed in thought, intent on some problem, with the hands crossed and leaning on a table for support, as it were to give freer scope to the labour of the brain, and though the eyes are directed towards you, it is with evident absence of mind. Not so the other portrait, No. 1210. All its faculties are collected to see what it can make of you, as if you had intruded upon it with some hostile design, it takes a defensive attitude, and shews as much vigilance as dignity. It draws itself up, as if to say, 'Well, what do you think of me?' and exercises a discretionary power over you. It has 'an eye to threaten and command,' not to be lost in idle thought, or in ruminating over some abstruse, speculative proposition. It is this intense personal character which, I think, gives the superiority to Titian's portraits over all others, and stamps them with a living and permanent interest. Of other pictures you tire, if you have them constantly before you; of



his, never. For other pictures have either an abstracted look and you dismiss them, when you have made up your mind on the subject as a matter of criticism; or an heroic look, and you cannot be always straining your enthusiasm; or an insipid look, and you sicken of it. But whenever you turn to look at Titian's portraits, they appear to be looking at you; there seems to be some question pending between you, as though an intimate friend or inveterate foe were in the room with you; they exert a kind of fascinating power; and there is that exact resemblance of individual nature which is always new and always interesting, because you cannot carry away a mental abstraction of it, and you must recur to the object to revive it in its full force and integrity. I would as soon have Raphael's or most other pictures hanging up in a Collection, that I might pay an occasional visit to them: Titian's are the only ones that I should wish to have hanging in the same room with me for company!

Titian in his portraits appears to have understood the principle of historical design better than any body. Every part tells, and has a bearing on the whole. There is no one who has such simplicity and repose—no violence, no affectation, no attempt at forcing an effect; insomuch that by the uninitiated he is often condemned as unmeaning and insipid. A turn of the eye, a compression of the lip decides the point. He just draws the face out of its most ordinary state, and gives it the direction he would have it take; but then every part takes the same direction, and the effect of this united impression (which is absolutely momentary and all but habitual) is wonderful. It is that which makes his portraits the most natural and the most striking in the world. It may be compared to the effect of a number of small loadstones, that by acting together lift the greatest weights. Titian seized upon the lines of character in the most original and connected point of view. Thus in his celebrated portrait of Hippolito de Medici, there is a keen, sharpened expression that strikes you, like a blow from the spear that he holds in his hand. The look goes through you; yet it has no frown, no startling gesticulation, no affected penetration. It is quiet, simple, but it almost withers you. The whole face and each separate feature is cast in the same acute or wedge-like form. The forehead is high and narrow, the eye-brows raised and coming to a point in the middle, the nose straight and peaked, the mouth contracted and drawn up at the corners, the chin acute, and the two sides of the face slanting to a point. The number of acute angles which the lines of the face form, are, in fact, a net entangling the attention and subduing the will. The effect is felt at once, though it asks time and consideration to understand the cause. It is a face which you would beware of rousing into anger or hostility,

as you would beware of setting in motion some complicated and dangerous machinery. The possessor of it, you may be sure, is no trifler. Such, indeed, was the character of the man. This is to paint true portrait and true history. So if our artist painted a mild and thoughtful expression, all the lines of the countenance were softened and relaxed. If the mouth was going to speak, the whole face was going to speak. It was the same in colour. The gradations are infinite, and yet so blended as to be imperceptible. No two tints are the same, though they produce the greatest harmony and simplicity of tone, like flesh itself. 'If,' said a person, pointing to the shaded side of a portrait of Titian, 'you could turn this round to the light, you would find it would be of the same colour as the other side!' In short, there is manifest in his portraits a greater tenaciousness and identity of impression than in those of any other painter. Form, colour, feeling, character, seemed to adhere to his eye, and to become part of himself; and his pictures, on this account, 'leave stings' in the minds of the spectators! There is, I grant, the same personal appeal, the same point-blank look in some of Raphael's portraits (see those of a Princess of Arragon and of Count Castiglione, No. 1150 and 1151) as in Titian: but they want the texture of the skin and the minute individual details to stamp them with the same reality. And again, as to the uniformity of outline in the features, this principle has been acted upon and carried to excess by Kneller and other artists. The eyes, the eye-brows, the nose, the mouth, the chin, are rounded off as if they were turned in a *lathe*, or as a peruke-maker arranges the curls of a wig. In them it is vile and mechanical, without any reference to truth of character or nature; and instead of being pregnant with meaning and originality of expression, produces only insipidity and monotony.

Perhaps what is offered above as a key to the peculiar expression of Titian's heads may also serve to explain the difference between painting or copying a portrait. As the perfection of his faces consists in the entire unity and coincidence of all the parts, so the difficulty of ordinary portrait-painting is to bring them to bear at all, or to piece one feature, or one day's labour on to another. In copying, this difficulty does not occur at all. The human face is not one thing, as the vulgar suppose, nor does it remain always the same. It has infinite varieties, which the artist is obliged to notice and to reconcile, or he will make strange work. Not only the light and shade upon it do not continue for two minutes the same: the position of the head constantly varies (or if you are strict with a sitter, he grows sullen and stupid), each feature is in motion every moment, even while the artist is working at it, and in the course of a day the whole expression

of the countenance undergoes a change, so that the expression which you gave to the forehead or eyes yesterday is totally incompatible with that which you have to give to the mouth to-day. You can only bring it back again to the same point or give it a consistent construction by an effort of imagination, or a strong feeling of character; and you must connect the features together less by the eye than by the mind. The mere setting down what you see in this medley of successive, teazing, contradictory impressions, would never do; either you must continually efface what you have done the instant before, or if you retain it, you will produce a piece of patchwork, worse than any caricature. There must be a comprehension of the whole, and in truth a *moral sense* (as well as a literal one) to unravel the confusion, and guide you through the labyrinth of shifting muscles and features. You must feel what *this* means, and dive into the hidden soul, in order to know whether *that* is as it ought to be; for you cannot be sure that it remains as it was. Portrait-painting is, then, painting from recollection and from a conception of character, with the object before us to assist the memory and understanding. In copying, on the contrary, one part does not run away and leave you in the lurch, while you are intent upon another. You have only to attend to what is before you, and finish it carefully a bit at a time, and you are sure that the whole will come right. One might parcel it out into squares, as in engraving, and copy one at a time, without seeing or thinking of the rest. I do not say that a conception of the whole, and a feeling of the art will not abridge the labour of copying, or produce a truer likeness; but it is the changeableness or identity of the object that chiefly constitutes the difficulty or facility of imitating it, and, in the latter case, reduces it nearly to a mechanical operation. It is the same in the imitation of *still-life*, where real objects have not a principle of motion in them. It is as easy to produce a *fac-simile* of a table or a chair as to copy a picture, because these things do not stir from their places any more than the features of a portrait stir from theirs. You may therefore bestow any given degree of minute and continued attention on finishing any given part without being afraid that when finished it will not correspond with the rest. Nay, it requires more talent to copy a fine portrait than to paint an original picture of a table or a chair, for the picture has a soul in it, and the table has not.—It has been made an objection (and I think a just one) against the extreme high-finishing of the drapery and back-grounds in portraits (to which some schools, particularly the French, are addicted), that it gives an unfinished look to the face, the most important part of the picture. A lady or a gentleman cannot sit quite so long or so still as a lay-

figure, and if you finish up each part according to the length of time it will remain in one position, the face will seem to have been painted for the sake of the drapery, not the drapery to set off the face. There is an obvious limit to every thing, if we attend to common sense and feeling. If a carpet or a curtain will admit of being finished more than the living face, we finish them less because they excite less interest, and we are less willing to throw away our time and pains upon them. This is the unavoidable result in a natural and well regulated style of art; but what is to be said of a school where no interest is felt in any thing, where nothing is known of any object but that it is there, and where superficial and petty details which the eye can explore, and the hand execute, with persevering and systematic indifference, constitute the soul of art?

The expression is the great difficulty in history or portrait-painting, and yet it is the great clue to both. It renders forms doubly impressive from the interest and signification attached to them, and at the same time renders the imitation of them critically nice, by making any departure from the line of truth doubly sensible. Mr. Coleridge used to say, that what gave the romantic and mysterious interest to Salvator's landscapes was their containing some implicit analogy to human or other living forms. His rocks had a latent resemblance to the outline of a human face; his trees had the distorted jagged shape of a satyr's horns and grotesque features. I do not think this is the case; but it may serve to supply us with an illustration of the present question. Suppose a given outline to represent a human face, but to be so disguised by circumstances and little interruptions as to be mistaken for a projecting fragment of a rock in a natural scenery. As long as we conceive of this outline merely as a representation of a rock or other inanimate substance, any copy of it, however rude, will seem the same and as good as the original. Now let the disguise be removed and the general resemblance to a human face pointed out, and what before seemed perfect, will be found to be deficient in the most essential features. Let it be further understood to be a profile of a particular face that we know, and all likeness will vanish from the want of the individual expression, which can only be given by being felt. That is, the imitation of external and visible form is only correct or nearly perfect, when the information of the eye and the direction of the hand are aided and confirmed by the previous knowledge and actual feeling of character in the object represented. The more there is of character and feeling in any object, and the greater sympathy there is with it in the mind of the artist, the closer will be the affinity between the imitation and the thing imitated; as the more there is of character and expression in

the object without a proportionable sympathy with it in the imitator, the more obvious will this defect and the imperfection of the copy become. That is, expression is the great test and measure of a genius for painting, and the fine arts. The mere imitation of *still-life*, however perfect, can never furnish proofs of the highest skill or talent; for there is an inner sense, a deeper intuition into nature that is never unfolded by merely mechanical objects, and which, if it were called out by a new soul being suddenly infused into an inanimate substance, would make the former unconscious representation appear crude and vapid. The eye is sharpened and the hand made more delicate in its tact,

> 'While by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.'

We not only *see*, but *feel* expression, by the help of the finest of all our senses, the sense of pleasure and pain. He then is the greatest painter who can put the greatest quantity of expression into his works, for this is the nicest and most subtle object of imitation; it is that in which any defect is soonest visible, which must be able to stand the severest scrutiny, and where the power of avoiding errors, extravagance, or tameness can only be supplied by the fund of moral feeling, the strength or delicacy of the artist's sympathy with the ideal object of his imitation. To see or imitate any given sensible object is one thing, the effect of attention and practice; but to give expression to a face is to collect its meaning from a thousand other sources, is to bring into play the observation and feeling of one's whole life, or an infinity of knowledge bearing upon a single object in different degrees and manners, and implying a loftiness and refinement of character proportioned to the loftiness and refinement of expression delineated. Expression is of all things the least to be mistaken, and the most evanescent in its manifestations. Pope's lines on the character of women may be addressed to the painter who undertakes to embody it.

> 'Come then, the colours and the ground prepare,
> Dip in the rainbow, trick it off in air;
> Chuse a firm cloud, before it falls, and in it
> Catch, ere it change, the Cynthia of the minute.'

It is a maxim among painters that no one can paint more than his own character, or more than he himself understands or can enter into. Nay, even in copying a head, we have some difficulty in making the features unlike our own. A person with a low forehead

or a short chin puts a constraint on himself in painting a high forehead or a long chin. So much has sympathy to do with what is supposed to be a mere act of servile imitation!—To pursue this argument one step farther. People sometimes wonder what difficulty there can be in painting, and ask what you have to do but to set down what you see? This is true, but the difficulty is to see what is before you. This is at least as difficult as to learn any trade or language. We imagine that we see the whole of nature, because we are aware of no more than we see of it. We also suppose that any given object, a head, a hand, is one thing, because we see it at once, and call it by one name. But how little we see or know, even of the most familiar face, beyond a vague abstraction, will be evident to every one who tries to recollect distinctly all its component parts, or to draw the most rude outline of it for the first time; or who considers the variety of surface, the numberless lights and shades, the tints of the skin, every particle and pore of which varies, the forms and markings of the features, the combined expression, and all these caught (as far as common use is concerned) by a random glance, and communicated by a passing word. A student, when he first copies a head, soon comes to a stand, or is at a loss to proceed from seeing nothing more in the face than there is in his copy. After a year or two's practice he never knows when to have done, and the longer he has been occupied in copying a face or any particular feature, sees more and more in it, that he has left undone and can never hope to do. There have been only four or five painters who could ever produce a copy of the human countenance really fit to be seen; and even of these few none was ever perfect, except in giving some single quality or partial aspect of nature, which happened to fall in with his own particular studies and the bias of his genius, as Raphael the drawing, Rembrandt the light and shade, Vandyke ease and delicacy of appearance, &c. Titian gave more than any one else, and yet he had his defects. After this, shall we say that any, the commonest and most uninstructed spectator sees the whole of nature at a single glance, and would be able to stamp a perfect representation of it on the canvass, if he could embody the image in his mind's eye?

I have in this Essay mentioned one or two of the portraits in the Louvre that I like best. The two landscapes which I should most covet, are the one with a Rainbow by Rubens, and the Adam and Eve in Paradise by Poussin. In the first, shepherds are reposing with their flocks under the shelter of a breezy grove, the distances are of air, and the whole landscape seems just washed with the

shower that has passed off. The Adam and Eve by Poussin is the full growth and luxuriant expansion of the principle of vegetation. It is the first lovely dawn of creation, when nature played her virgin fancies wild; when all was sweetness and freshness, and the heavens dropped fatness. It is the very *ideal* of landscape-painting, and of the scene it is intended to represent. It throws us back to the first ages of the world, and to the only period of perfect human bliss, which is, however, on the point of being soon disturbed.[1] I should be contented with these four or five pictures, the Lady by Vandyke, the Titian, the Presentation in the Temple, the Rubens, and the Poussin, or even with faithful copies of them, added to the two which I have of a young Neapolitan Nobleman and of the Hippolito de Medici; and which, when I look at them, recal other times and the feelings with which they were done. It is now twenty years since I made those copies, and I hope to keep them while I live. It seems to me no longer ago than yesterday. Should the next twenty years pass as swiftly, forty years will have glided by me like a dream. By this kind of speculation I can look down as from a slippery height on the beginning, and the end of life beneath my feet, and the thought makes me dizzy!

My taste in pictures is, I believe, very different from that of rich and princely collectors. I would not give two-pence for the whole Gallery at Fonthill. I should like to have a few pictures hung round the room, that speak to me with well-known looks, that touch some string of memory—not a number of varnished, smooth, glittering gewgaws. The taste of the Great in pictures is singular, but not unaccountable. The King is said to prefer the Dutch to the Italian school of painting; and if you hint your surprise at this, you are looked upon as a very Gothic and *outrè* sort of person. You are

[1] I may be allowed to mention here (not for the sake of invidious comparison, but to explain my meaning,) Mr. Martin's picture of Adam and Eve asleep in Paradise. It has this capital defect, that there is no *repose* in it. You see two insignificant naked figures, and a preposterous architectural landscape, like a range of buildings over-looking them. They might as well have been represented on the top of the pinnacle of the Temple, with the world and all the glories thereof spread out before them. They ought to have been painted imparadised in one another's arms, shut up in measureless content, with Eden's choicest bowers closing round them, and Nature stooping to clothe them with vernal flowers. Nothing could be too retired, too voluptuous, too sacred from 'day's garish eye;' on the contrary, you have a gaudy panoramic view, a glittering barren waste, a triple row of clouds, of rocks, and mountains, piled one upon the other, as if the imagination already bent its idle gaze over that wide world which was so soon to be our place of exile, and the aching, restless spirit of the artist was occupied in building a stately prison for our first parents, instead of decking their bridal bed, and wrapping them in a short-lived dream of bliss.

told, however, by way of consolation,—'To be sure, there is Lord Carlisle likes an Italian picture—Mr. Holwell Carr likes an Italian picture—the Marquis of Stafford is fond of an Italian picture—Sir George Beaumont likes an Italian picture!' These, notwithstanding, are regarded as quaint and daring exceptions to the established rule; and their preference is a species of *leze majesté* in the Fine Arts, as great an eccentricity and want of fashionable etiquette, as if any gentleman or nobleman still preferred old claret to new, when the King is known to have changed his mind on this subject; or was guilty of the offence of dipping his fore-finger and thumb in the middle of a snuff-box, instead of gradually approximating the contents to the edge of the box, according to the most approved models. One would imagine that the great and exalted in station would like lofty subjects in works of art, whereas they seem to have an almost exclusive predilection for the mean and mechanical. One would think those whose word was law, would be pleased with the great and striking effects of the pencil;[1] on the contrary, they admire nothing but the little and elaborate. They have a fondness for cabinet and *furniture* pictures, and a proportionable antipathy to works of genius. Even art with them must be servile, to be tolerated. Perhaps the seeming contradiction may be explained thus. Such persons are raised so high above the rest of the species, that the more violent and agitating pursuits of mankind appear to them like the turmoil of ants on a mole-hill. Nothing interests them but their own pride and self-importance. Our passions are to them an impertinence; an expression of high sentiment they rather shrink from as a ludicrous and upstart assumption of equality. They therefore like what glitters to the eye, what is smooth to the touch; but they shun, by an instinct of sovereign taste, whatever has a soul in it, or implies a reciprocity of feeling. The Gods of the earth can have no interest in any thing human; they are cut off from all sympathy with the 'bosoms and businesses of men.' Instead of requiring to be wound up beyond their habitual feeling of stately dignity, they wish to have the springs of over-strained pretension let down, to be relaxed with 'trifles light as air,' to be amused with the familiar and frivolous, and to have the world appear a scene of *still-life*, except as they disturb it! The little in thought and internal sentiment is a natural relief and set off to the oppressive sense of external magnificence.

[1] The Duke of Wellington, it is said, cannot enter into the merits of Raphael; but he admires 'the spirit and fire' of Tintoret. I do not wonder at this bias. A sentiment probably never dawned upon his Grace's mind; but he may be supposed to relish the dashing execution and *hit or miss* manner of the Venetian artist. Oh, Raphael! well is it that it was one who did not understand thee, that blundered upon the destruction of humanity!

Hence kings babble and repeat they know not what. A childish dotage often accompanies the consciousness of absolute power. Repose is somewhere necessary, and the soul sleeps while the senses gloat around! Besides, the mechanical and high-finished style of art may be considered as something *done to order*. It is a task to be executed more or less perfectly, according to the price given, and the industry of the artist. We stand by, as it were, to see the work done, insist upon a greater degree of neatness and accuracy, and exercise a sort of petty, jealous jurisdiction over each particular. We are judges of the minuteness of the details, and though ever so nicely executed, as they give us no ideas beyond what we had before, we do not feel humbled in the comparison. The artizan scarcely rises into the artist; and the name of genius is degraded rather than exalted in his person. The performance is so far ours that we have paid for it, and the highest price is all that is necessary to produce the highest finishing. But it is not so in works of genius and imagination. Their price is above rubies. The inspiration of the Muse comes not with the *fiat* of a monarch, with the donation of a patron; and, therefore, the Great turn with disgust or effeminate indifference from the mighty masters of the Italian school, because such works baffle and confound their self-love, and make them feel that there is something in the mind of man which they can neither give nor take away.

'Quam nihil ad tuum, Papiniane, ingenium!'

ESSAY XXVI

ON NOVELTY AND FAMILIARITY

'*Horatio.* Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.
Hamlet. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.'

Shakespear represents his *Grave-digger* as singing while he is occupied in his usual task of flinging the skulls out of the earth with his spade. On this he takes occasion to remark, through one of his speakers, the effect of habit in blunting our sensibility to what is painful or disgusting in itself. 'Custom hath made it a property of easiness in him.' To which the other is made to reply in substance, that those who have the least to do have the finest feelings generally. The minds and bodies of those who are enervated by luxury and

ease, and who have not had to encounter the wear-and-tear of life, present a soft, unresisting surface to outward impressions, and are endued with a greater degree of susceptibility to pleasure and pain. Habit in most cases hardens and encrusts, by taking away the keener edge of our sensations: but does it not in others quicken and refine, by giving a mechanical facility, and by engrafting an acquired sense? Habit may be said in technical language to add to our irritability and lessen our sensibility, or to sharpen our active perceptions, and deaden our passive ones. Practice makes perfect—experience makes us wise. The one refers to what we have to do, the other to what we feel. I will endeavour to explain the distinction, and to give some examples in each kind.

Clowns, servants, and common labourers have, it is true, hard and coarse hands, because they are accustomed to hard and coarse employments; but mechanics, artizans, and artists of various descriptions, who are as constantly employed, though on works demanding greater skill and exactness, acquire a proportionable nicety and discrimination of tact with practice and unremitted application. A working jeweller can perceive slight distinctions of surface, and make the smallest incisions in the hardest substances from mere practice: a woollen-draper perceives the different degrees of the fineness in cloth, on the same principle; a watchmaker will insert a great bony fist, and perform the nicest operations among the springs and wheels of a complicated and curious machinery, where the soft delicate hand of a woman or a child would make nothing but blunders. Again, a blind man shews a prodigious sagacity in hearing and almost *feeling* objects at a distance from him. His other senses acquire an almost preternatural quickness from the necessity of recurring to them oftener, and relying on them more implictly, in consequence of the privation of sight. The musician distinguishes tones and notes, the painter expressions and colours, from constant habit and unwearied attention, that are quite lost upon the common observer. The critic discovers beauties in a poem, the poet features in nature, that are generally overlooked by those who have not employed their imaginations or understandings on these particular studies. Whatever art or science we devote ourselves to, we grow more perfect in with time and practice. The range of our perceptions is at once enlarged and refined. But—there lies the question that must 'give us pause'—is the pleasure increased in proportion to our habitual and critical discernment, or does not our familiarity with nature, with science, and with art, breed an indifference for those objects we are most conversant with and most masters of? I am afraid the answer, if an honest one, must be on the

unfavourable side; and that from the moment that we can be said to understand any subject thoroughly, or can execute any art skilfully, our pleasure in it will be found to be on the decline. No doubt, that with the opening of every new inlet of ideas, there is unfolded a new source of pleasure; but this does not last much longer than the first discovery we make of this *terra incognita*; and with the closing up of every avenue of novelty, of curiosity, and of mystery, there is an end also of our transport, our wonder, and our delight; or it is converted into a very sober, rational, and household sort of satisfaction.

There is a craving after information, as there is after food; and it is in supplying the void, in satisfying the appetite, that the pleasure in both cases chiefly consists. When the uneasy want is removed, both the pleasure and the pain cease. So in the acquisition of knowledge or of skill, it is the transition from perplexity and helplessness, that relieves and delights us; it is the surprise occasioned by the unfolding of some new aspect of nature, that fills our eyes with tears and our hearts with joy; it is the fear of not succeeding, that makes success so welcome, and a giddy uncertainty about the extent of our acquisitions, that makes us drunk with unexpected possession. We are happy not in the total amount of our knowledge, but in the last addition we have made to it, in the removal of some obstacle, in the drawing aside of some veil, in the contrast between the obscurity of night and the brightness of the dawn. But objects are magnified in the mist and haze of confusion; the mind is most open to receive striking impressions of things in the outset of its progress. The most trivial pursuits or successes then agitate the whole brain; whereas afterwards the most important only occupy one corner of it. The facility which habit gives in admitting new ideas, or in reflecting upon old ones, renders the exercise of intellectual activity a matter of comparative insignificance; and by taking away the resistance and the difficulty, takes away the liveliness of impulse that imparts a sense of pleasure or of pain to the soul. No one reads the same book twice over with the same satisfaction. It is not that our knowledge of it is not greater the second time than the first: but our interest in it is less, because the addition we make to our knowledge the second time is very trifling, while in the first perusal it was all *clear gain*. Thus in youth and childhood every step is fairy-ground, because every step is an advance in knowledge and pleasure, opens new prospects, and excites new hopes, as in after-years, though we may enlarge our circle a little, and measure our way more accurately, yet in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred we only retrace our steps, and repeat the same dull round of weariness and disappointment. Know-

ledge is power; but it is not pleasure, except when it springs immediately out of ignorance and incapacity. An actor, who plays a character for the hundred and fortieth time, understands and perhaps performs it better; but does he feel the part, has he the same pleasure in it as he had the first time? The wonder is how he can go through with it at all; nor could he, were he not supported by the plaudits of the audience, who seem like new friends to him, or urged on by the fear of disgrace, to which no man is ever reconciled.

I will here take occasion to suggest what appears to me the true state of the question, whether a great actor is enabled to embody his part from feeling or from study. I think at the time from neither; but merely (or chiefly at least) from habit. But I think he must have felt the character in the first instance with all the enthusiasm of nature and genius, or he never would have distinguished himself in it. To say that the intellect alone can determine or supply the movements or the language of passion, is little short of a contradiction in terms. Substituting the head for the heart is like saying that the eye is a judge of sounds or the ear of colours. If a man in cold blood knows how another feels in a fit of passion, it is from having been in a passion himself before. Nor can the indifferent observation of the outward signs attain to the truth of nature, without the inward sympathy to impel us forward, and to tell us where to stop. Without that living criterion, we shall be either tame and mechanical, or turgid and extravagant. The study of individual models produces imitators and mannerists: the study of general principles produces pedants. It is feeling alone that makes up for the deficiencies of either mode of study; that expands the meagreness of the one, that unbends the rigidity of the other, that floats a man into the tide of popularity, and electrifies an audience. It is feeling, or it is hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and hatred, that is the original source of the effects in nature which are brought forward on the stage; and assuredly it is a sympathy with this feeling, that must dictate the truest and most natural imitations of them. To suppose that a person altogether dead to these primary passions of the human breast can make a great actor, or feign the effects while he is entirely ignorant of the cause, is no less absurd than to suppose that I can describe a place which I never saw, or mimic a voice which I never heard, or speak a language which I never learnt. An actor void of genius and passion may be taught to strut about the stage, and mouth out his words with mock-solemnity, and give himself the airs of a great actor, but he will never *be* one. He may express his own emptiness and vanity, and make people stare, but he will not 'send the hearers weeping to their beds.' The true, original

master-touches that go to the heart, must come from it. There is neither truth or beauty without nature. Habit may repeat the lesson that is thus learnt, just as a poet may transcribe a fine passage without being affected by it at the time; but he could not have written it in the first instance without feeling the beauty of the object he was describing, or without having been deeply impressed with it in some moment of enthusiasm. It was then that his genius was inspired, his style formed, and the foundation of his fame laid. People tell you that Sterne was hard-hearted; that the author of Waverley is a mere worldling; that Shakespear was a man without passions. Do not believe them. Their passions might have worn themselves out with constant over-excitement, so that they only knew how they formerly felt; or they might have the controul over them; or from their very compass and variety they might have kept one another in check, so that none got very much a-head, and broke out into extravagant and overt acts. But those persons must have experienced the feelings they express, and entered into the situations they describe so finely, at some period or other of their lives: the sacred source from whence the tears trickle down the cheeks of others, was once full, though it may be now dried up; and in all cases where a strong impression of truth and nature is conveyed to the minds of others, it must have previously existed in an equal or greater degree in the mind producing it. Perhaps it does not strictly follow, that

'They best can paint them, who have felt them most.'

To do this in perfection other qualifications may be necessary: language may be wanting where the heart speaks, but that the tongue or the pen or pencil can describe the workings of nature with the highest truth and eloquence without being prompted or holding any communication with the heart, past, present, or to come, I utterly deny. When Talma, in the part of Œdipus, after the discovery of his misfortune, slowly raises his hands and joins them together over his head in an attitude of despair, I conceive it is because in the extremity of his anguish, and in the full sense of his ghastly and desolate situation, he feels a want of something as a shield or covering to protect him from the weight that is ready to fall and crush him, and he makes use of that fine and impressive action for this purpose: —not that I suppose he is affected in this manner every time he repeats it, but he never would have thought of it but from having this deep and bewildering feeling of weight and oppression, which naturally suggested it to his imagination, and at the same time assured him that it was just. Feeling is in fact the scale that weighs the truth of all original conceptions. When Mrs. Siddons played the

part of Mrs. Beverley in the Gamester, and on Stukely's abrupt declaration of his unprincipled passion at the moment of her husband's imprisonment, threw into her face that noble succession of varying emotions, first seeming not to understand him, then, as her doubt is removed, rising into sudden indignation, then turning to pity, and ending in a burst of hysteric scorn and laughter, was this the effect of stratagem or forethought as a painter arranges a number of colours on his palette? No—but by placing herself amply in the situation of her heroine, and entering into all the circumstances, and feeling the dignity of insulted virtue and misfortune, that wonderful display of keen and high-wrought expressions burst from her involuntarily at the same moment, and kindled her face almost into a blaze of lightning. Yet Mrs. Siddons is sometimes accused of being cold and insensible. I do not wonder that she may seem so after exertions such as these; as the Sybils of old after their inspired prophetic fury sunk upon the ground, breathless and exhausted. But that any one can embody high thoughts and passions without having the prototypes in their own breast, is what I shall not believe upon hearsay, and what I am sure cannot be proved by argument.

It is a common complaint, that actors and actresses are dull when off the stage. I do not know that it is the case; but I own I should be surprised if it were otherwise. Many persons expect from the *éclat* with which they appear in certain characters to find them equally brilliant in company, not considering that the effect they produce in their artificial characters is the very circumstance that must disqualify them for producing any in ordinary cases. They who have intoxicated and maddened multitudes by their public display of talent, can rarely be supposed to feel much stimulus in entertaining one or two friends, or in being the life of a dinner-party. She who perished over-night by the dagger or the bowl as Cassandra or Cleopatra, may be allowed to sip her tea in silence, and not to be herself again, till she revives in Aspasia. A tragic tone does not become familiar conversation, and any other must come very awkwardly and reluctantly from a great tragic actress. At least, in the intervals of her professional paroxysms, she will hardly set up for a verbal critic or *blue-stocking*. Comic actors again have their repartees put into their mouths, and must feel considerably at a loss when their cue is taken from them. The most sensible among them are modest and silent. It is only those of second-rate pretensions who think to make up for the want of original wit by practical jokes and *slang* phrases. *Theatrical* manners are, I think, the most repulsive of all others.—Actors live on applause, and drag on a laborious artificial existence by the administration of perpetual provocatives to

We afterwards divide and compare, and judge of things only as they differ from other things. At first we measure them from the ground, take in only the groups and masses, and are struck with the entire contrast to our former ignorance and inexperience. If we apprehend only a vague gaudy outline, this is not a disadvantage; for we fill it up with our desires and fancies, which are most potent in their capacity to create good or evil. The first glow of passion in the breast throws its radiance over the opening path of life; and it is wonderful how much of the volume of our future existence the mere title-page discloses. The results do not indeed exactly correspond with our expectations; but our passions survive their first eager ebullition and bitter disappointment, the bulk of our sensations consists of broken vows and fading recollections; and it is not astonishing that there is so near a resemblance between our earliest anticipations and our latest sigh, since we obstinately delight things to be to the last, what we at first wished to find them.

"Hope travels through, nor quits us till we die."

Our existence is a tissue of passion, and our successive years only present us with fainter and fainter copies of the first proof-impressions. "The dregs of life," therefore, contain very little of force or spirit which

—— "the first sprightly runnings could not give."

Imagination is, in this sense, sometimes truer than reality; for our passions being "compacted of imagination," and our desires whetted by impatience and delay, often lose some of their taste and essence with possession. So in youth we look forward to the advances of age, and feel them more strongly than when they arrive; nor is this more extraordinary than that from the height of a precipice the descent below should make us giddy, and that we should be less sensible of it when we come to the ground. Experience can teach us little, I suspect, after the first unfolding of our faculties, and the first strong excitement of outward objects. It can only add to or take away from our original impressions, and the imagination can make out the addition as largely or feel the privation as sharply as the senses. The little it can teach us, which is to moderate our chagrins and sober our expectations to the dull standard of reality, we will not learn. "Reason panders will;" and if we have been disappointed forty times, we are only the more resolved that the forty-first time shall make up for all the rest, and our hope grows desperate as the chances are against it. A man who is wary, is so naturally; he who is of a sanguine and credulous disposition, will

continue so in spite of warning; we hearken to no voice but that of our secret inclinations and native bias. Mr. Wordsworth being asked why he admired the sleep of infancy, said he thought 'there was a grandeur in it;' the reason of which is partly owing to the contrast of total unconsciousness to all the ills of life, and partly that it is the germ implying all the future good; an untouched, untold treasure. In the outset of life, all that is to come of it seems to press with double force upon the heart, and our yearnings after good and dread of evil are in proportion to the little we have known of either. The first ebullitions of hope and fear in the human heart lift us to heaven, or sink us to the abyss; but when served out to us in dribblets and palled by repetition, they lose their interest and effect. Or the dawn of experience, like that of day, shews the wide prospect stretched out before us, and dressed in its liveliest colours; as we proceed, we tire of the length of the way and complain of its sameness. The path of life is stripped of its freshness and beauty; and as we grow acquainted with them, we become indifferent to weal or woe.

The best part of our lives we pass in counting on what is to come; or in fancying what may have happened in real or fictitious story to others. I have had more pleasure in reading the adventures of a novel (and perhaps changing situations with the hero) than I ever had in my own. I do not think any one can feel much happier—a greater degree of heart's ease—than I used to feel in reading Tristram Shandy, and Peregrine Pickle, and Tom Jones, and the Tatler, and Gil Blas of Santillane, and Werter, and Boccacio. It was some years after that I read the last, but his tales

> 'Dallied with the innocence of love,
> Like the old Time.'

The story of Frederigo Alberigi affected me as if it had been my own case, and I saw his hawk upon her perch in the clear, cold air, 'and how fat and fair a bird she was,' as plain as ever I saw a picture of Titian's; and felt that I should have served her up as he did, as a banquet for his mistress, who came to visit him at his own poor farm. I could wish that Lord Byron had employed himself while in Italy in rescuing such a writer as Boccacio from unmerited obloquy, instead of making those notable discoveries, that Pope was a poet, and that Shakespear was not one! Mrs. Inchbald was always a great favourite with me. There is the true soul of woman breathing from what she writes, as much as if you heard her voice. It is as if Venus had written books. I first read her *Simple Story* (of all places in the world) at M——. No matter where it

was; for it transported me out of myself. I recollect walking out to escape from one of the tenderest parts, in order to return to it again with double relish. An old crazy hand-organ was playing Robin Adair, a summer-shower dropped manna on my head, and slaked my feverish thirst of happiness. Her heroine, Miss Milner, was at my side. My dream has since been verified:—how like it was to the reality! In truth, the reality itself was but a dream. Do I not still see that 'simple movement of her finger' with which Madame Basil beckoned Jean Jacques to the seat at her feet, the heightened colour that tinged her profile as she sat at her work netting, the bunch of flowers in her hair? Is not the glow of youth and beauty in her cheek blended with the blushes of the roses in her hair? Do they not breathe the breath of love? And (what though the adventure was unfinished by either writer or reader) is not the blank filled up with the rare and subtle spirit of fancy, that imparts the fullness of delight to the air-drawn creations of brain? I once sat on a sunny bank in a field in which the green blades of corn waved in the fitful northern breeze, and read the letter in the *New Eloise*, in which St. Preux describes the Pays de Vaud. I never felt what Shakespear calls my 'glassy essence,' so much as then. My thoughts were pure and free. They took a tone from the objects before me, and from the simple manners of the inhabitants of mountain-scenery, so well described in the letter. The style gave me the same sensation as the drops of morning dew before they are scorched by the sun; and I thought Julia did well to praise it. I wished I could have written such a letter. That wish, enhanced by my admiration of genius and the feeling of the objects around me, was accompanied with more pleasure than if I had written fifty such letters, or had gained all the reputation of its immortal author! Of all the pictures, prints, or drawings I ever saw, none ever gave me such satisfaction as the rude etchings at the top of Rousseau's *Confessions*. There is a necromantic spell in the outlines. Imagination is a witch. It is not even said anywhere that such is the case, but I had got it in my head that the rude sketches of old-fashioned houses, stone-walls, and stumps of trees represented the scenes at Annecy and Vevay, where he who relished all more sharply than others, and by his own intense aspirations after good had nearly delivered mankind from the yoke of evil, first drew the breath of hope. Here love's golden rigol bound his brows, and here fell from it. It was the partition-wall between life and death to him, and all beyond it was a desert! . . .

'And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail.'

I used to apply this line to the distant range of hills in a paltry landscape, which however had a tender vernal tone and a dewy freshness. I could look at them till my eyes filled with tears, and my heart dissolved in faintness. Why do I recal the circumstance after a lapse of years with so much interest? Because I felt it then. Those feeble outlines were linked in my mind to the purest, fondest yearnings after good, that dim, airy space contained my little all of hope, buoyed up by charming fears; the delight with which I dwelt upon it, enhanced by my ignorance of what was in store for me, was free from mortal grossness, familiarity or disappointment, and I drank pleasure out of the bosom of the silent hills and gleaming vallies as from a cup filled to the brim with love-philtres and poisonous sweetness by the sorceress, Fancy!

Mr. Opie used to consider it as an error to suppose that an artist's first works were necessarily crude and raw, and that he went on regularly improving on them afterwards. On the contrary, he maintained that they had the advantage of being done 'with all his heart, and soul, and might;' that they contained his best thoughts, those which his genius most eagerly prompted, and which he had matured and treasured up longest, from the first dawn of art and nature on his mind; and that his subsequent works were rather after-thoughts, and the leavings and *make-shifts* of his invention. There is a great deal of truth in this view of the matter. *Poeta nascitur, non fit*; that is, it is the strong character and impulse of the mind that forces out its way and stamps itself upon outward objects, not that is elicited and laboriously raised into artificial importance by contrivance and study. An *improving* actor, artist, or poet never becomes a great one. I have known such in my time, who were always advancing by slow and sure steps to the height of their profession; but in the mean time, some man of genius rose, and passing them, at once seized on the top-most round of ambition's ladder, so that they still remained in the second class. A volcano does not give warning when it will break out, nor a thunder-bolt send word of its approach. Mr. Kean stamped himself the first night in Shylock; he never did any better. Mr. Kemble is the only great and truly impressive actor I remember, who rose to his stately height by the interposition of art and gradations of merit. A man of genius is *sui generis*—to be known, he need only to be seen—you can no more dispute whether he is one, than you can dispute whether it is a panther that is shewn you in a cage. Mrs. Siddons did not succeed the first time she appeared on the London boards, but then it was in Garrick's time, who sent her back to the country. He startled and put her out in some part she had to play with him, by

the amazing vividness and intrepidity of his style of acting. Yet old Dr. Chauncey who frequented Sir Joshua Reynolds's, said that he was not himself in his latter days, that he got to play harlequin's tricks, and was too much in the trammels of the stage, and was quite different from what he was when he came out at Goodman's-Field's, when he surprised the town in Richard, as if he had dropped from the clouds, and his acting was all fire and air. Mrs. Siddons was hardly satisfied with the admiration of those who had only seen her latter performances, which were distinguished chiefly by their towering height and marble outline. She has been heard to exclaim, 'You have seen me only in Lady Macbeth and Queen Katherine, and Belvidera and Jane Shore—you should have seen me when I played these characters alternately with Juliet, and Desdemona, and Calista, and the Mourning Bride, night after night, when I first came from Bath!' If she indeed filled these parts with a beauty and tenderness equal to the sublimity of her other performances, one had only to see her in them and die! Lord Byron says, that Lady Macbeth died when Mrs. Siddons left the stage. Could not even her acting help him to understand Shakespear? —Sir Joshua Reynolds at a late period saw some portraits he had done in early life, and lamented the little progress he had made. Yet he belonged to the laborious and *blinding* class. No one generation improves much upon another; no one individual improves much upon himself. What we impart to others we have within us, and we have it almost from the first. The strongest insight we obtain into nature is that which we receive from the broad light thrown upon it by the sudden developement of our own faculties and feelings.

Even in science the greatest discoveries have been made at an early age. Sir Isaac Newton was not twenty when he saw the apple fall to the ground. Harvey, I believe, discovered the circulation of the blood at eighteen. Berkeley was only six and twenty when he published his Essay on Vision. Hartley's great principle was developed in an inaugural dissertation at College. Hume wrote his Treatise on Human Nature while he was yet quite a young man. Hobbes put forth his metaphysical system very soon after he quitted the service of Lord Bacon. I believe also that Galileo, Leibnitz, and Euler commenced their career of discovery quite young; and I think it is only then, before the mind becomes set in its own opinions or the dogmas of others, that it can have vigour or elasticity to throw off the load of prejudice and seize on new and extensive combinations of things. In exploring new and doubtful tracts of speculation, the mind strikes out true and original views; as a drop

of water hesitates at first what direction it shall take, but afterwards follows its own course. The very oscillation of the mind in its first perilous and staggering search after truth, brings together extreme arguments and illustrations, that would never occur in a more settled and methodised state of opinion, and felicitous suggestions turn up when we are trying experiments on the understanding, of which we can have no hope when we have once made up our minds to a conclusion, and only go over the previous steps that led to it. So that the greater number of opinions we have formed, we are less capable of forming new ones, and slide into common-places, according as we have them at hand to resort to. It is easier taking the beaten path than making our way over bogs and precipices. The great difficulty in philosophy is to come to every question with a mind fresh and unshackled by former theories, though strengthened by exercise and information; as in the practice of art, the great thing is to retain our admiration of the beautiful in nature, together with the power to imitate it, and not, from a want of this original feeling, to be enslaved by formal rules, or dazzled by the mere difficulties of execution. Habit is necessary to give power: but with the stimulus of novelty, the love of truth and nature ceases through indolence or insensibility. Hence wisdom too commonly degenerates into prejudice; and skill into pedantry. Ask a metaphysician what subject he understands best; and he will tell you that which he knows the least about. Ask a musician to play a favourite tune, and he will select an air the most difficult of execution. If you ask an artist his opinion of a picture, he will point to some defect in perspective or anatomy. If an opera-dancer wishes to impress you with an idea of his grace and accomplishments, he will throw himself into the most distorted attitude possible. Who would not rather see a dance in the forest of Montmorenci on a summer's evening by a hundred laughing peasant-girls and their partners, who come to this scene for several miles round, rushing through the forest-glades, as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, than all the *pirouettes*, *pied-a-plombs*, and *entrechats*, performed at the French Opera by the whole *corps de ballet*? Yet the first only just contrive to exert their heels, and not put their partners out, whilst the last perform nothing but feats of dexterity and miracles of skill—not one of which they could ever perform, if they had not lost every idea of natural grace, ease, or decorum in habitual callousness or professional vanity, or had one feeling left which prompts their rustic rivals to run through the mazes of the dance

'With heedless haste and giddy cunning,'

while the leaves tremble to the festive sounds of music, and the air circles in gladder currents to their joyous movements!—There was a dance in the pantomime at Covent-Garden two years ago, which I could have gone to see every night. I *did* go to see it every night that I could make an excuse for that purpose. It was nothing; it was childish. Yet I could not keep away from it. Some young people came out of a large twelfth-cake, dressed in full court-costume, and danced a quadrille, and then a minuet, to some divine air. Was it that it put me in mind of my school-boy days, and of the large bunch of lilac that I used to send as a present to my partner? Or of times still longer past, the court of Louis XIV. the Duke de Nemours and the Princess of Cleves? Or of the time when she who was all grace moved in measured steps before me, and wafted me into Elysium? I know not how it was; but it came over the sense with a power not to be resisted,

'Like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.'

I mention these things to shew, as I think, that pleasures are not

'Like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, the bloom is shed,
Or like the snow, falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.'

On the contrary, I think they leave traces of themselves behind them, durable and delightful even in proportion to the regrets accompanying them, and which we relinquish only with our being. The most irreconcileable disappointments are perhaps those which arise from our obtaining all we wish.

The Opera-figurante despises the peasant-girl that dances on the green, however much happier she may be or may be thought by the first. The one can do what the other cannot. Pride is founded not on the sense of happiness, but on the sense of power; and this is one great source of self-congratulation, if not of self-satisfaction. This, however, is continually increasing, or at least renewing with our advances in skill and the conquest of difficulties; and, accordingly, there is no end of it while we live or till our faculties decay. He who undertakes to master any art or science has cut himself out work enough to last the rest of his life, and may promise himself

all the enjoyment that is to be found in looking down with self-complacent triumph on the inferiority of others, or all the torment that there is in envying their success. There is no danger that the machine will ever stand still afterwards. Mandeville has endeavoured to shew that if it were not for envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, mankind would perish of pure chagrin and *ennui*; and I am not in the humour to contradict him.—The same spirit of emulation that urges us on to surpass others, supplies us with a new source of satisfaction (of something which is at least the reverse of indifference and apathy) in the indefatigable exertion of our faculties and the perception of new and minor shades of distinction. These, if not so delightful, are more subtle, and may be multiplied indefinitely. They borrow something of taste and pleasure from their first origin, till they dwindle away into mere abstractions. The exercise, whether of our minds or bodies, sharpens and gives additional alacrity to our active impressions, as the indulgence of our sensibility, whether to pleasure or pain, blunts our passive ones. The will to do, the power to think, is a progressive faculty, though not the capacity to feel. Otherwise, the business of life could not go on. If it were necessity alone that oiled the springs of society, people would grow tired and restive, they would lie down and die. But with use there comes a habit, a positive need of something to keep off the horror of vacancy. The sense of power has a sense of pleasure annexed to it, or what is practically tantamount, an impulse, an endeavour, that carries us through the most tiresome drudgery or the hardest tasks. Indolence is a part of our nature too. There is a *vis inertiæ* at first, a difficulty in beginning or in leaving off. I have spun out this Essay in a good measure from the dread I feel of entering upon new subjects.—Some such reasoning is necessary to account for the headstrong and incorrigible violence of the passions when the will is once implicated. So in ambition, in avarice, in the love of gaming and of drinking (where the strong stimulus is the chief excitement), there is no hope of any termination, of any pause or relaxation; but we are hurried forward, as by a fever, when all sense of pleasure is dead, and we only persevere as it were out of contradiction, and in defiance of the obstacles, the mortifications and privations we have to encounter. The resistance of the will to outward circumstances, its determination to create its own good or evil, is also a part of the same constitution of the mind. The solitary captive can make a companion of the spider that straggles into his cell, or find amusement in counting the nails in his dungeon-door; while the proud lord that placed him there feels the depth of solitude in crowded ball-rooms and hot theatres, and turns with weariness from the scenes of luxury

with French books, pictures, statues, plays, operas, newspapers, parties, and an incessant farrago of words, so that it has not a moment left to look at home into itself, or abroad into nature? Must they cross the Channel to increase the vast stock of impertinence, to acquire foreign tastes, suppress native prejudices, and reconcile the opinions of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews? It is quite needless. There is a project at present entertained in certain circles, to give the French a taste for Shakespear. They should really begin with the English.[1] Many of their own best authors are neglected; others, of whom new Editions have been printed, lie heavy on the booksellers' hands. It is by an especial dispensation of Providence that languages wear out; as otherwise we should be buried alive under a load of books and knowledge. People talk of a philosophical and universal language. We have enough to do to understand our own, and to read a thousandth part (perhaps not the best) of what is written in it. It is ridiculous and monstrous vanity. We would set up a standard of general taste and of immortal renown; we would have the benefits of science and of art universal, because we suppose our own capacity to receive them unbounded; and we would have the thoughts of others never die, because we flatter ourselves that our own will last for ever; and like the frog imitating the ox in the fable, we burst in the vain attempt. Man, whatever he may think, is a very limited being; the world is a narrow circle drawn about him; the horizon limits our immediate view; immortality means a century or two. Languages happily restrict the mind to what is of its own native growth and fitted for it, as rivers and mountains bound countries; or the empire of learning, as well as states, would become unwieldy and overgrown. A little importation from foreign markets may be good; but the home production is the chief thing to be looked to.

'The proper study of the *French* is *French!*'

No people can act more uniformly upon a conviction of this maxim, and in that respect I think they are much to be commended.

Mr. Lamb has lately taken it into his head to read St. Evremont, and works of that stamp. I neither praise nor blame him for it.

[1] I would as soon try to remove one side of the Seine or of the Thames to the other. By the time an author begins to be much talked of abroad, he is going out of fashion at home. We have many little Lord Byrons among ourselves, who think they can write nearly, if not quite as well. I am not anxious to spread Shakespear's fame, or to increase the number of his admirers. 'What's he that wishes for more men from England?' &c. It is enough if he is admired by all those who understand him. He may be very inferior to many French writers, for what I know; but I am quite sure he is superior to all English ones. We may say that, without national prejudice or vanity.

He observed, that St. Evremont was a writer half-way between Montaigne and Voltaire, with a spice of the wit of the one and the sense of the other. I said I was always of opinion that there had been a great many clever people in the world, both in France and England, but I had been sometimes rebuked for it. Lamb took this as a slight reproach; for he has been a little exclusive and national in his tastes. He said that Coleridge had lately given up all his opinions respecting German literature, that all their high-flown pretensions were in his present estimate sheer cant and affectation, and that none of their works were worth any thing but Schiller's and the early ones of Goethè. 'What,' I said, 'my old friend Werter! How many battles have I had in my own mind, and compunctious visitings of criticism to stick to my old favourite, because Coleridge thought nothing of it! It is hard to find one's-self right at last!' I found they were of my mind with respect to the celebrated FAUST —that it is a mere piece of abortive perverseness, a wilful evasion of the subject and omission of the characters; that it is written on the absurd principle that as to produce a popular and powerful effect is not a proof of the highest genius, so to produce no effect at all is an evidence of the highest poetry—and in fine, that the German play is not to be named in a day with Marlowe's. Poor Kit! How Lord Byron would have sneered at this comparison between the boasted modern and a contemporary of Shakespear's! Captain Medwin or his Lordship must have made a mistake in the enumeration of plays of that period still acted. There is one of Ben Jonson's, 'Every Man in his Humour;' and one of Massinger's, 'A new Way to Pay old Debts;' but there is none of Ford's either acted or worth acting, except ''Tis Pity She 's a Whore,' and that would no more bear acting than Lord Byron and Goethè together could have written it.

This account of Coleridge's vacillations of opinion on such subjects might be adduced to shew that our love for foreign literature is an acquired or rather an assumed taste; that it is, like a foreign religion, adopted for the moment, to answer a purpose or to please an idle humour; that we do not enter into the *dialect* of truth and nature in their works as we do in our own; and that consequently our taste for them seldom becomes a part of ourselves, that 'grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength,' and only quits us when we die. Probably it is this acquaintance with, and pretended admiration of, extraneous models, that adulterates and spoils our native literature, that polishes the surface but undermines its basis, and by taking away its original simplicity, character, and force, makes it just tolerable to others, and a matter of much indifference to ourselves. When I see Lord Byron's poems stuck all over Paris, it strikes me

as ominous of the decline of English genius: on the contrary, when I find the Scotch Novels in still greater request, I think it augurs well for the improvement of French taste.[1]

There was advertised not long ago in Paris an Elegy on the Death of Lord Byron, by his friend Sir Thomas More,—evidently confounding the living bard with the old statesman. It is thus the French in their light, salient way transpose every thing. The mistake is particularly ludicrous to those who have ever seen Mr. Moore, or Mr. Shee's portrait of him in Mr. Hookham's shop, and who chance to see Holbein's head of Sir Thomas More in the Louvre. There is the same difference that there is between a surly English mastiff and a little lively French pug. Mr. Moore's face is gay and smiling enough, old Sir Thomas's is severe, not to say sour. It seems twisted awry with difficult questions, and bursting asunder with a ponderous load of meaning. Mr. Moore has nothing of this painful and puritanical cast. He floats idly and fantastically on the top of the literature of his age; his renowned and almost forgotten namesake has nearly sunk to the bottom of his. The author of Utopia was no flincher, he was a martyr to his opinions, and was burnt to death for them—the most heroic action of Mr. Moore's life is, the having burnt the Memoirs of his friend!

The expression in Holbein's pictures conveys a faithful but not very favourable notion of the literary character of that period. It is painful, dry, and laboured. Learning was then an ascetic, but recluse and profound. You see a weight of thought and care in the studious heads of the time of the Reformation, a sincerity, an integrity, a sanctity of purpose, like that of a formal dedication to a religious life, or the inviolability of monastic vows. They had their work to do; we reap the benefits of it. We skim the surface, and travel along the high road. They had to explore dark recesses, to dig through

[1] I have heard the popularity of Sir Walter Scott in France ingeniously, and somewhat whimsically traced to Buonaparte. He did not like the dissipation and frivolity of Paris, and relegated the country-gentlemen to their seats for eight months in the year. Here they yawn and gasp for breath, and would not know what to do without the aid of the author of Waverley. They ask impatiently when the 'Tales of the Crusaders' will be out; and what you think of 'Redgauntlet?' To the same cause is to be attributed the change of manners. *Messieurs, je veux des mœurs*, was constantly in the French Ruler's mouth. Manners, according to my informant, were necessary to consolidate his plans of tyranny;—how, I do not know. Forty years ago no man was ever seen in company with *Madame sa femme*. A Comedy was written on the *ridicule* of a man being in love with his wife. Now he must be with her three-and-twenty hours out of the four-and-twenty; it is from this that they date the decline of happiness in France; and the unfortunate couple endeavour to pass the time and get rid of *ennui* as well as they can, by reading the Scotch Novels together.

mountains, and make their way through pathless wildernesses. It is no wonder they looked grave upon it. The seriousness, indeed, amounts to an air of devotion; and it has to me something fine, manly, and *old English* about it. There is a heartiness and determined resolution; a willingness to contend with opposition; a superiority to ease and pleasure; some sullen pride, but no trifling vanity. They addressed themselves to study as to a duty, and were ready to 'leave all and follow it.' In the beginning of such an era, the difference between ignorance and learning, between what was commonly known and what was possible to be known, would appear immense; and no pains or time would be thought too great to master the difficulty. Conscious of their own deficiencies and the scanty information of those about them, they would be glad to look out for aids and support, and to put themselves apprentices to time and nature. This temper would lead them to exaggerate rather than to make light of the difficulties of their undertaking; and would call forth sacrifices in proportion. Feeling how little they knew, they would be anxious to discover all that others had known, and instead of making a display of themselves, their first object would be to dispel the mist and darkness that surrounded them. They did not cull the flowers of learning, or pluck a leaf of laurel for their own heads, but tugged at the roots and very heart of their subject, as the woodman tugs at the roots of the gnarled oak. The sense of the arduousness of their enterprise braced their courage, so that they left nothing half done. They inquired *de omne scibile et quibusdam aliis*. They ransacked libraries, they exhausted authorities. They acquired languages, consulted books, and decyphered manuscripts. They devoured learning, and swallowed antiquity whole, and (what is more) digested it. They read incessantly, and remembered what they read, from the zealous interest they took in it. Repletion is only bad, when it is accompanied with apathy and want of exercise. They laboured hard, and shewed great activity both of reasoning and speculation. Their fault was that they were too prone to unlock the secrets of nature with the key of learning, and often to substitute authority in the place of argument. They were also too polemical; as was but naturally to be expected in the first breaking up of established prejudices and opinions. It is curious to observe the slow progress of the human mind in loosening and getting rid of its trammels, link by link, and how it crept on its hands and feet, and with its eyes bent on the ground, out of the cave of Bigotry, making its way through one dark passage after another; those who gave up one half of an absurdity contending as strenuously for the remaining half, the lazy current of tradition stemming the tide of innovation, and making an endless

struggle between the two. But in the dullest minds of this period there was a deference to the opinions of their leaders; an imposing sense of the importance of the subject, of the necessity of bringing all the faculties to bear upon it; a weight either of armour or of internal strength, a zeal either *for* or *against*; a head, a heart, and a hand, a holding out to the death for conscience sake, a strong spirit of proselytism—no flippancy, no indifference, no compromising, no pert shallow scepticism, but truth was supposed indissolubly knit to good, knowledge to usefulness, and the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind to hang in the balance. The pure springs of a lofty faith (so to speak) had not then descended by various gradations from their skyey regions and cloudy height, to find their level in the smooth, glittering expanse of modern philosophy, or to settle in the stagnant pool of stale hypocrisy! A learned man of that day, if he knew no better than others, at least knew all that they did. He did not come to his subject, like some dapper barrister who has never looked at his brief, and trusts to the smartness of his wit and person for the agreeable effect he means to produce, but like an old and practised counsellor, covered over with the dust and cobwebs of the law. If it was a speaker in Parliament, he came prepared to handle his subject, armed with cases and precedents, the constitution and history of Parliament from the earliest period, a knowledge of the details of business and the local interests of the country; in short, he had taken up *the freedom of the House*, and did not treat the question like a cosmopolite, or a writer in a Magazine. If it were a divine, he knew the Scriptures and the Fathers, and the Councils and the Commentators by heart, and thundered them in the ears of his astonished audience. Not a trim essay or a tumid oration, patronising religion by modern sophisms, but the Law and the Prophets, the chapter and the verse. If it was a philosopher, Aristotle and the Schoolmen were drawn out in battle-array against you:—if an antiquarian, the Lord bless us! There is a passage in Selden's notes on Drayton's Poly-Olbion, in which he elucidates some point of topography by a reference not only to Stowe and Holinshed and Camden and Saxo-Grammaticus and Dugdale and several other authors that we are acquainted with, but to twenty obscure names, that no modern reader ever heard of; and so on through the notes to a folio volume, written apparently for relaxation. Such were the intellectual amusements of our ancestors! Learning then ordinarily lay-in of folio volumes: now she litters octavos and duodecimos, and will soon, as in France, miscarry of half sheets! Poor Job Orton! why should I not record a jest of his (perhaps the only one he ever made) emblematic as it is of the living and the learning of the good old times? The

Rev. Job Orton was a Dissenting Minister in the middle of the last century, and had grown heavy and gouty by sitting long at dinner and at his studies. He could only get down stairs at last by spreading the folio volumes of Caryl's Commentaries upon Job on the steps and sliding down them. Surprised one day in his descent, he exclaimed, 'You have often heard of Caryl upon Job—now you see Job upon Caryl!' This same quaint-witted gouty old gentleman seems to have been one of those 'superior, happy spirits,' who slid through life on the rollers of learning, enjoying the good things of the world and laughing at them, and turning his infirmities to a livelier account than his patriarchal name-sake. Reader, didst thou ever hear either of Job Orton or of Caryl on Job? I daresay not. Yet the one did not therefore slide down his theological staircase the less pleasantly; nor did the other compile his Commentaries in vain! For myself, I should like to browze on folios, and have to deal chiefly with authors that I have scarcely strength to lift, that are as solid as they are heavy, and if dull, are full of matter. It is delightful to repose on the wisdom of the ancients; to have some great name at hand, besides one's own initials always staring one in the face: to travel out of one's-self into the Chaldee, Hebrew, and Egyptian characters; to have the palm-trees waving mystically in the margin of the page, and the camels moving slowly on in the distance of three thousand years. In that dry desert of learning, we gather strength and patience, and a strange and insatiable thirst of knowledge. The ruined monuments of antiquity are also there, and the fragments of buried cities (under which the adder lurks) and cool springs, and green sunny spots, and the whirlwind and the lion's roar, and the shadow of angelic wings. To those who turn with supercilious disgust from the ponderous tomes of scholastic learning, who never felt the witchery of the Talmuds and the Cabbala, of the Commentators and the Schoolmen, of texts and authorities, of types and anti-types, hieroglyphics and mysteries, dogmas and contradictions, and endless controversies and doubtful labyrinths, and quaint traditions, I would recommend the lines of Warton written in a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon:

> 'Deem not devoid of elegance the sage,
> By fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,
> Of painful pedantry the poring child,
> Who turns of these proud domes the historic page,
> Now sunk by time and Henry's fiercer rage.
> Thinkst thou the warbling Muses never smiled
> On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
> His thoughts, on themes (unclassic falsely styled)
> Intent. While cloister'd piety displays

tion in the universe. This is the great secret of his writings—a perfect indifference to self. Whether it is the same in his politics, I cannot say. I see no comparison between his prose writing and Lord Byron's poems. The only writer that I should hesitate about is Wordsworth. There are thoughts and lines of his that to me shew as fine a mind, a subtler sense of beauty than any thing of Sir Walter's, such as those above quoted, and that other line in the Laodamia—

'Elysian beauty, melancholy grace.'

I would as soon have written that line as have carved a Greek statue. But in this opinion I shall have three or four with me, and all the rest of the world against me. I do not dislike a House-of-Commons Minority in matters of taste—that is, one that is select, independent, and has a proxy from posterity.—To return to the question with which I set out.

Learning is its own exceeding great reward; and at the period of which we speak, it bore other fruits, not unworthy of it. Genius, when not smothered and kept down by learning, blazed out triumphantly over it; and the Fancy often rose to a height proportioned to the depth to which the Understanding had struck its roots. After the first emancipation of the mind from the trammels of Papal ignorance and superstition, people seemed to be in a state of breathless wonder at the new light that was suffered to break in upon them. They were startled as 'at the birth of nature from the unapparent deep.' They seized on all objects that rose in view with a firm and eager grasp, in order to be sure whether they were imposed upon or not. The mind of man, 'pawing to get free' from custom and prejudice, struggled and plunged, and like the fabled Pegasus, opened at each spring a new source of truth. Images were piled on heaps, as well as opinions and facts, the ample materials for poetry or prose, to which the bold hand of enthusiasm applied its torch, and kindled it into a flame. The accumulation of past records seemed to form the frame-work of their prose, as the observation of external objects did of their poetry—

'Whose body nature was, and *man* the soul.'

Among poets they have to boast such names, for instance, as Shakespear, Spenser, Beaumont and Fletcher, Marlowe, Webster, Deckar, and soon after, Milton; among prose-writers, Selden, Bacon, Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, and Sir Thomas Brown; for patriots, they have such men as Pym, Hampden, Sydney; and for a witness of their zeal and piety, they have Fox's Book of Martyrs, instead of

which we have Mr. Southey's Book of the Church, and a whole host of renegades! Perhaps Jeremy Taylor and also Beaumont and Fletcher may be mentioned as rather exceptions to the gravity and severity I have spoken of as characteristic of our earlier literature. It is true, they are florid and voluptuous in their style, but they still keep their state apart, and there is an eloquence of the heart about them, which seems to gush from the 'pure well of English undefiled.' The one treats of sacred things with a vividness and fervour as if he had a revelation of them: the others speak of human interests with a tenderness as if man's nature were divine. Jeremy Taylor's pen seems to have been guided by the very spirit of joy and youth, but yet with a sense of what was due to the reverence of age, and 'tears of pious awe, that feared to have offended.' Beaumont and Fletcher's love-scenes are like the meeting of hearts in Elysium. Let any one have dwelt on any object with the greatest fondness, let him have cherished the feeling to the utmost height, and have it put to the test in the most trying circumstances, and he will find it described to the life in Beaumont and Fletcher. Our modern dramatists (with one exception[1]), appeal not to nature or the heart, but—to the readers of modern poetry. Words and paper, each *couleur de rose*, are the two requisites of a fashionable style. But the glossy splendour, the voluptuous glow of the obsolete, old-fashioned writers just mentioned has nothing artificial, nothing meretricious in it. It is the luxuriance of natural feeling and fancy. I should as soon think of accusing the summer-rose of vanity for unfolding its leaves to the dawn, or the hawthorn that puts forth its blossoms in the genial warmth of spring, of affecting to be fine. We have heard a good deal of the pulpit-eloquence of Bossuet and other celebrated preachers of the time of Fenelon; but I doubt much whether all of them together could produce any number of passages to match the best of those in the Holy Living and Dying, or even Baxter's severe but thrilling denunciations of the insignificance and nothingness of life and the certainty of a judgment to come. There is a fine portrait of this last-named powerful controversialist, with his high forehead and black velvet cap, in Calamy's Non-Conformist's Memorial, containing an account of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers at the Restoration of Charles II. This was a proud list for Old England; and the account of their lives, their zeal, their eloquence and sufferings for conscience sake, is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the human mind. How high it can soar in faith! How nobly it can arm itself with resolution and fortitude! How far it can surpass itself in cruelty and fraud! How incapable it seems to be of good,

[1] The author of Virginius.

except as it is urged on by the contention with evil! The retired and inflexible descendants of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers and their adherents are gone with the spirit of persecution that gave a soul and body to them; and with them, I am afraid, the spirit of liberty, of manly independence, and of inward self-respect is nearly extinguished in England. There appears to be no natural necessity for evil, but that there is a perfect indifference to good without it. One thing exists and has a value set upon it only as it has a foil in some other; learning is set off by ignorance, liberty by slavery, refinement by barbarism. The cultivation and attainment of any art or excellence is followed by its neglect and decay; and even religion owes its zest to the spirit of contradiction; for it flourishes most from persecution and hostile factions. Mr. Irvine speaks of the great superiority of religion over every other motive, since it enabled its professors to 'endure having hot molten lead poured down their throats.' He forgets that it was religion that poured it down their throats, and that this principle, mixed with the frailty of human passion, has often been as ready to inflict, as to endure. I could make the world good, wise, happy to-morrow, if, when made, it would be contented to remain so without the alloy of mischief, misery, and absurdity: that is, if every possession did not require the principle of contrast, contradiction, and excess, to enliven and set it off and keep it at a safe distance from sameness and insipidity.

The different styles of art and schools of learning vary and fluctuate on this principle. After the Restoration of Charles, the grave, enthusiastic, puritanical, 'prick-eared' style became quite exploded, and a gay and piquant style, the reflection of courtly conversation and polished manners, and borrowed from the French, came into fashion, and lasted till the Revolution. Some examples of the same thing were given in the time of Charles I. by Sir J. Suckling and others, but they were eclipsed and overlaid by the prevalence and splendour of the opposite examples. It was at its height, however, in the reign of the restored monarch, and in the witty and licentious writings of Wycherley, Congreve, Rochester, and Waller. Milton alone stood out as a partisan of the old Elizabethan school. Out of compliment, I suppose, to the Houses of Orange and Hanover, we sobered down, after the Revolution, into a strain of greater demureness, and into a Dutch and German fidelity of imitation of domestic manners and individual character, as in the periodical Essayists, and in the works of Fielding and Hogarth. Yet, if the two last-named painters of manners are not English, who are so? I cannot give up my partiality to them for the fag-end of a theory. They have this mark of genuine English intellect, that they constantly combine truth

of external observation with strength of internal meaning. The Dutch are patient observers of nature, but want character and feeling. The French, as far as we have imitated them, aim only at the pleasing, and glance over the surfaces of words and things. Thus has our literature descended (according to the foregoing scale) from the tone of the pulpit to that of the court or drawing-room, from the drawing-room into the parlour, and from thence, if some critics say true, into the kitchen and ale-house. It may do even worse than that!

French literature has undergone great changes in like manner, and was supposed to be at its height in the time of Louis XIV. We sympathise less, however, with the pompous and set speeches in the tragedies of Racine and Corneille, or in the serious comedies of Moliere, than we do with the grotesque farces of the latter, with the exaggerated descriptions and humour of Rabelais (whose wit was a madness, a drunkenness), or with the accomplished humanity, the easy style, and gentlemanly and scholar-like sense of Montaigne. But these we consider as in a great measure English, or as what the old French character inclined to, before it was corrupted by courts and academies of criticism. The exquisite graces of La Fontaine, the indifferent sarcastic tone of Voltaire and Le Sage, who make light of every thing, and who produce their greatest effects with the most imperceptible and rapid touches, we give wholly to the constitutional genius of the French, and despair of imitating. Perhaps in all this we proceed by guess-work at best. Nations (particularly rival nations) are bad judges of one another's literature or physiognomy. The French certainly do not understand *us*: it is most probable we do not understand *them*. How slowly great works, great names make their way across the Channel! M. Tracey's 'Ideologie' has not yet been heard of among us, and a Frenchman who asks if you have read it, almost subjects himself to the suspicion of being the author. They have also their little sects and parties in literature, and though they do not nickname and vilify their rivals, as is done with us (thanks to the national politeness); yet if you do not belong to the prevailing party, they very civilly suppress all mention of you, your name is not noticed in the Journals, nor your work inquired for at the shops.[1]

Those who explain every thing by final causes (that is, who deduce

[1] In Paris, to be popular, you must wear out, they say, twenty pair of pumps and twenty pair of silk stockings, in calls upon the different Newspaper Editors. In England, you have only to give in your resignation at the Treasury, and you receive your passport to the John Bull Parnassus; otherwise you are shut out and made a bye word. Literary jealousy and littleness is still the motive, politics the pretext, and blackguardism the mode.

causes from effects) might avail themselves of their privilege on this occasion. There must be some checks to the excessive increase of literature as of population, or we should be overwhelmed by it; and they are happily found in the envy, dulness, prejudices, and vanity of mankind. While we think we are weighing the merits of an author, we are indulging our own national pride, indolence, or ill-humour, by laughing at what we do not understand, or condemning what thwarts our inclinations. The French reduce all philosophy to a set of agreeable sensations: the Germans reduce the commonest things to an abstruse metaphysics. The one are a mystical, the other a superficial people. Both proceed by the severest logic; but the real guide to their conclusions is the proportion of phlegm or mercury in their dispositions. When we appeal to a man's reason against his inclinations, we speak a language without meaning, and which he will not understand. Different nations have favourite modes of feeling and of accounting for things to please themselves and fall in with their ordinary habits; and our different systems of philosophy, literature, and art meet, contend, and repel one another on the confines of opinion, because their elements will not amalgamate with our several humours, and all the while we fancy we settle the question by an abstract exercise of reason, and by laying down some refined and exclusive standard of taste. There is no great harm in this delusion, nor can there be much in seeing through it; for we shall still go on just as we did before.[1]

ESSAY XXVIII

MADAME PASTA AND MADEMOISELLE MARS

I LIKED Mademoiselle Mars exceedingly well, till I saw Madame Pasta whom I liked so much better. The reason is, the one is the perfection of French, the other of natural acting. Madame Pasta is Italian, and she might be English—Mademoiselle Mars belongs emphatically to her country; the scene of her triumphs is Paris. She plays naturally too, but it is French nature. Let me explain. She has, it is true, none of the vices of the French theatre, its

[1] Buonaparte got a committee of the French Institute to draw up a report of the Kantean Philosophy; he might as well have ordered them to draw up a report of the geography of the moon. It is difficult for an Englishman to understand Kant; for a Frenchman impossible. The latter has a certain routine of phrases into which his ideas run habitually as into a mould, and you cannot get him out of them.

extravagance, its flutter, its grimace, and affectation, but her merit in these respects is as it were negative, and she seems to put an artificial restraint upon herself. There is still a pettiness, an attention to *minutiæ*, an etiquette, a mannerism about her acting: she does not give an entire loose to her feelings, or trust to the unpremeditated and habitual impulse of her situation. She has greater elegance, perhaps, and precision of style than Madame Pasta, but not half her boldness or grace. In short, every thing she does is voluntary, instead of being spontaneous. It seems as if she might be acting from marginal directions to her part. When not speaking, she stands in general quite still. When she speaks, she extends first one hand and then the other, in a way that you can foresee every time she does so, or in which a machine might be elaborately constructed to develope different successive movements. When she enters, she advances in a straight line from the other end to the middle of the stage with the slight unvarying trip of her country-women, and then stops short, as if under the drill of a *fugal-man*. When she speaks, she articulates with perfect clearness and propriety, but it is the facility of a singer executing a difficult passage. The case is that of habit, not of nature. Whatever she does, is right in the intention, and she takes care not to carry it too far; but she appears to say beforehand, '*This* I will do, I must not do *that*.' Her acting is an inimitable study or consummate rehearsal of the part as a preparatory performance: she hardly yet appears to have assumed the character; something more is wanting, and that something you find in Madame Pasta. If Mademoiselle Mars has to smile, a slight and evanescent expression of pleasure passes across the surface of her face; twinkles in her eyelids, dimples her chin, compresses her lips, and plays on each feature: when Madame Pasta smiles, a beam of joy seems to have struck upon her heart, and to irradiate her countenance. Her whole face is bathed and melted in expression, instead of its glancing from particular points. When she speaks, it is in music. When she moves, it is without thinking whether she is graceful or not. When she weeps, it is a fountain of tears, not a few trickling drops, that glitter and vanish the instant after. The French themselves admire Madame Pasta's acting, (who indeed can help it?) but they go away thinking how much one of her simple movements would be improved by their extravagant gesticulations, and that her noble, natural expression would be the better for having twenty airs of mincing affectation added to it. In her Nina there is a listless vacancy, an awkward grace, a want of *bienseance*, that is like a child or a changeling, and that no French actress would venture upon for a moment, lest she should be suspected of a want of *esprit* or of *bon mien*. A French

actress always plays before the court; she is always in the presence of an audience, with whom she first settles her personal pretensions by a significant hint or side-glance, and then as much nature and simplicity as you please. Poor Madame Pasta thinks no more of the audience than Nina herself would, if she could be observed by stealth, or than the fawn that wounded comes to drink, or the flower that droops in the sun or wags its sweet head in the gale. She gives herself entirely up to the impression of the part, loses her power over herself, is led away by her feelings either to an expression of stupor or of artless joy, borrows beauty from deformity, charms unconsciously, and is transformed into the very being she represents. She does not act the character—she *is* it, looks it, breathes it. She does not study for an effect, but strives to possess herself of the feeling which should dictate what she is to do, and which gives birth to the proper degree of grace, dignity, ease, or force. She makes no point all the way through, but her whole style and manner is in perfect keeping, as if she were really a love-sick, care-crazed maiden, occupied with one deep sorrow, and who had no other idea or interest in the world. This alone is true nature and true art. The rest is sophistical; and French art is not free from the imputation; it never places an implicit faith in nature but always mixes up a certain portion of art, that is, of consciousness and affectation with it. I shall illustrate this subject from a passage in Shakespear.

> '*Polixenes.*—Shepherdess,
> (A fair one are you) will you fit our ages
> With flow'rs of winter?
> *Perdita.*—Sir, the year growing ancient,
> Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
> Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' th' season
> Are our carnations and streak'd gilliflowers,
> Which some call nature's bastards; of that kind
> Our rustic garden's barren, and I care not
> To get slips of them.
> *Polix.*—Wherefore, gentle maiden,
> Do you neglect them?
> *Perdita.*—For I have heard it said,
> There is an art which in their piedness shares
> With great creating nature.
> *Polix.*—Say, there be,
> Yet nature is made better by no mean,
> But nature makes that mean; so o'er that art,
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art,
> That nature makes; you see, sweet maid, we marry
> A gentle scyon to the wildest stock,
> And make conceive a bark of baser kind

By bud of nobler race. This is an art,
Which does mend nature, change it rather; but
The art itself is nature.
Perdita.—So it is.
Polix.—Then make your garden rich in gilliflowers,
And do not call them bastards.
Perdita.—I'll not put
A dibble in earth, to set one slip of them;
No more than, were I painted, I should wish
This youth to say, 'twere well; and only therefore
Desire to breed by me.—*Winter's Tale, Act IV.*

Madame Pasta appears to be of Perdita's mind in respect to her acting, and I applaud her resolution heartily. We English are charged unjustly with wishing to disparage the French: we cannot help it; there is a natural antipathy between the two nations. Thus unable to deny their theatrical merit, we are said insidiously to have invented the appellation, *French nature*, to explain away or throw a stigma on their most successful exertions:

—— 'Though that their art be nature,
We throw such changes of vexation on it,
As it may lose some colour.'

The English are a heavy people, and the most like a stone of all others. The French are a lively people, and more like a feather. They are easily moved and by slight causes, and each part of the impression has its separate effect: the English, if they are moved at all (which is a work of time and difficulty), are moved altogether, or in mass, and the impression, if it takes root, strikes deep and spreads wide, involving a number of other impressions in it. If a fragment of a rock wrenched from its place rolls slowly at first, gathers strength and fury as it proceeds, tears up everything in its way, and thunders to the plain below, there is something noble and imposing in the sight, for it is an image of our own headlong passions and the increasing vehemence of our desires. But we hate to see a feather launched into the air and driven back on the hand that throws it, shifting its course with every puff of wind, and carried no farther by the strongest than by the slightest impulse. It is provoking (is it not?) to see the strength of the blow always defeated by the very insignificance and want of resistance in the object, and the impulse received never answering to the impulse given. It is the very same fluttering, fidgetting, tantalizing, inconsequential, ridiculous process that annoys us in the French character. There seems no *natural* correspondence between objects and feelings, between things and words. By yielding to every impulse at once, nothing produces

a powerful or permanent impression; nothing produces an aggregate impression, for every part tells separately. Every idea turns off to something else, or back upon itself; there is no progress made, no blind impulse, no accumulation of imagination with circumstances, no absorption of all other feelings in one overwhelming one, that is, no keeping, no *momentum*, no integrity, no totality, no inflexible sincerity of purpose, and it is this resolution of the sentiments into their detached points and first impressions, so that they do not take an entire and involuntary hold of them, but either they can throw them off from their lightness, or escape from them by reason of their minuteness, that we English complain of as French nature or a want of nature, for by nature is only meant that the mind identifies itself with something so as to be no longer master of itself, and the French mind never identifies itself with any thing, but always has its own consciousness, its own affectation, its own gratification, its own slippery inconstancy or impertinent prolixity interposed between the object and the impression. It is this theatrical or artificial nature with which we cannot and will not sympathise, because it circumscribes the truth of things and the capacities of the human mind within the petty round of vanity, indifference, and physical sensations, stunts the growth of imagination, effaces the broad light of nature, and requires us to look at all things through the prism of their petulance and self-conceit. The French in a word leave *sincerity* out of their nature (not moral but imaginative sincerity) cut down the varieties of feeling to their own narrow and superficial standard, and having clipped and adulterated the current coin of expression, would pass it off as sterling gold. We cannot make an exchange with them. They are affected by things in a different manner from us, not in a different degree; and a mutual understanding is hopeless. We have no dislike to foreigners as such: on the contrary, a rage for foreign artists and works of art is one of our foibles. But if we give up our national pride, it must be to our taste and understandings. Nay, we adopt the manners and the fashions of the French, their dancing and their cooking,—not their music, not their painting, not their poetry, not their metaphysics, not their style of acting. If we are sensible of our own stupidity, we cannot admire *their* vivacity; if we are sick of our own awkwardness, we like it better than their grace; we cannot part with our grossness for their refinement; if we would be glad to have our lumpish clay animated, it must be with true Promethean heat, not with painted phosphorus: they are not the Frankensteins that must perform this feat. Who among us in reading Schiller's Robbers for the first time ever asked if it was German or not? Who in reading Klopstock's Messiah did not object that it was

German, not because it was German, but because it was heavy; that is, because the imagination and the heart do not act like a machine, so as to be wound up or let down by the pulleys of the will? Do not the French complain (and complain justly), that a picture is English, when it is coarse and unfinished, and leaves out the details which are one part of nature? Do not the English remonstrate against this defect too, and endeavour to cure it? But it may be said we relish Schiller, because he is barbarous, violent, and like Shakespear. We have the cartoons of Raphael then, and the Elgin marbles; and we profess to admire and understand these too, and I think without any affectation. The reason is that there is no affectation in them. We like those noble outlines of the human face at Hampton Court; the sustained dignity of the expression; the broad, ample folds of the drapery; the bold, massive limbs; there is breath and motion in them, and we would willingly be so transformed and spiritualised: but we do not want to have our heavy, stupid faces flittered away into a number of glittering points or transfixed into a smooth petrifaction on French canvas. Our faces, if wanting in expression, have a settled purpose in them; are as solid as they are stupid; and we are at least flesh and blood. We also like the sway of the limbs and negligent grandeur of the Elgin marbles; in spite of their huge weight and manly strength, they have the buoyancy of a wave of the sea, with all the ease and softness of flesh: they fall into attitudes of themselves: but if they were put into attitudes by the genius of Opera-dancing, we should feel no disposition to imitate or envy them, any more than we do the Zephyr and Flora graces of French statuary. We prefer a single head of Chantry's to a quarry of French sculpture. The English are a modest people, except in comparing themselves with their next neighbours, and nothing provokes their pride in this case, so much as the self-sufficiency of the latter. When Madame Pasta walks in upon the stage, and looks about her with the same unconsciousness or timid wonder as the young stag in the forest; when she moves her limbs as carelessly as a tree its branches; when she unfolds one of her divine expressions of countenance, which reflect the inmost feelings of the soul, as the calm, deep lake reflects the face of heaven; do we not sufficiently admire her, do we not wish her ours, and feel, with the same cast of thought and character, a want of glow, of grace, and ease in the expression of what we feel? We bow, like Guiderius and Arviragus in the cave when they saw Imogen, as to a thing superior. On the other hand, when Mademoiselle Mars comes on the stage, something in the manner of a fantoccini figure slid along on a wooden frame, and making directly for the point at which her official operations commence—when her

face is pocketed into a hundred little expressions like the wrinkles on the skin of a bowl of cream, set in a window to cool, her eyes peering out with an ironical meaning, her nose pointing it, and her lips confirming it with a dry pressure—we admire indeed, we are delighted, we may envy, but we do not sympathise or very well know what to make of it. We are not electrified, as in the former instance, but *mind-mystified*.[1] We can manage pretty well with any one feeling or expression (like a clown that must be taught his letters one at a time) if it keeps on in the same even course, that expands and deepens by degrees, but we are distracted and puzzled, or at best only amused with that sort of expression which is hardly itself for two moments together, that shifts from point to point, that seems to have no place to rest on, no impulse to urge it forward, and might as well be twenty other things at the same time—where tears come so easily they can hardly be real, where smiles are so playful they appear put on, where you cannot tell what you are to believe, for the parties themselves do not know whether they are in jest or earnest, where the whole tone is ironical, conventional, and where the difference between nature and art is nearly imperceptible. This is what we mean by French nature, viz. that the feelings and ideas are so slight and discontinuous that they can be changed for others like a dress or visor; or else, to make up for want of truth and breadth, are caricatured into a mask. This is the defect of their tragedy, and the defect and excellence of their comedy; the one is a pompous abortion, the other a *fac-simile* of life, almost too close to be agreeable. A French comic actor might be supposed to have left his shop for half an hour to shew himself upon a stage—there is no difference, worth speaking of, between the man and the actor—whether on the stage or at home, he is equally full of gesticulation, equally voluble, and without meaning—as their tragic actors are solemn puppets, moved by rules, pulled by wires, and with their mouths stuffed with rant and bombast. This is the harm that can be said of them: they themselves are doubtless best acquainted with the good, and are not too diffident to tell it. Though other people abuse them, they can still praise themselves! I once knew a French lady who said all manner of good things and forgot them the next moment; who maintained an argument with

[1] Even her *j'existe* in Valeria (when she first acquires the use of sight) is pointed like an epigram, and *put in italics*, like a technical or metaphysical distinction, instead of being a pure effusion of joy. Accordingly a French pit-critic took up the phrase, insisting that *to exist* was common to all things, and asked what the expression was in the original German. This treatment of passion is *topical* and extraneous, and seldom strikes at the seat of the disorder, the heart.

great wit and eloquence, and presently after changed sides, without knowing that she had done so; who invented a story and believed it on the spot; who wept herself and made you weep with the force of her descriptions, and suddenly drying her eyes, laughed at you for looking grave. Is not this like acting? Yet it was not affected in her, but natural, involuntary, incorrigible. The hurry and excitement of her natural spirits was like a species of intoxication, or she resembled a child in thoughtlessness and incoherence. She was a Frenchwoman. It was nature, but nature that had nothing to do with truth or consistency.

In one of the Paris Journals lately, there was a criticism on two pictures by Girodet of Bonchamps and Cathelineau, Vendean chiefs. The paper is well written, and points out the defects of the portraits very fairly and judiciously. These persons are there called 'Illustrious Vendeans.' The dead dogs of 1812 are the illustrious Vendeans of 1824. Monsieur Chateaubriand will have it so, and the French are too polite a nation to contradict him. They split on this rock of complaisance, surrendering every principle to the fear of giving offence, as we do on the opposite one of party-spirit and rancorous hostility, sacrificing the best of causes, and our best friends to the desire of giving offence, to the indulgence of our spleen, and of an ill-tongue. We apply a degrading appellation, or bring an opprobrious charge against an individual; and such is our tenaciousness of the painful and disagreeable, so fond are we of brooding over grievances, so incapable are our imaginations of raising themselves above the lowest scurrility or the dirtiest abuse, that should the person attacked come out an angel from the contest, the prejudice against him remains nearly the same as if the charge had been fully proved. An unpleasant association has been created, and this is too delightful an exercise of the understanding with the English public easily to be parted with. John Bull would as soon give up an estate as a bug-bear. Having been once gulled, they are not soon *ungulled*. They are too knowing for that. Nay, they resent the attempt to undeceive them as an injury. The French apply a brilliant epithet to the most vulnerable characters; and thus gloss over a life of treachery or infamy. With them the immediate or last impression is every thing: with us, the first, if it is sufficiently strong and gloomy, never wears out! The French critic observes that M. Girodet has given General Bonchamps, though in a situation of great difficulty and danger, a calm and even smiling air, and that the portrait of Cathelineau, instead of a hero, looks only like an angry peasant. In fact, the lips in the first portrait are made of marmalade, the complexion is cosmetic, and the smile ineffably engaging; while

the eye of the peasant Catherineau darts a beam of light, such as no eye, however illustrious, was ever illumined with. But so it is, the Senses, like a favourite lap-dog, are pampered and indulged at any expence: the Imagination, like a gaunt hound, is starved and driven away. Danger and death, and ferocious courage and stern fortitude, however the subject may exact them, are unmanly topics and kept out of sight: but smiling lips and glistening eyes are pleasing objects, and there you find them. *The style of portrait requires it.* It is of this varnish and glitter of sentiment that we complain (perhaps it is no business of ours) as what must forever intercept the true feeling and genuine rendering of nature in French art, as what makes it spurious and counterfeit, and strips it of simplicity, force and grandeur. Whatever pleases, whatever strikes, holds out a temptation to the French artist too strong to be resisted, and there is too great a sympathy in the public mind with this view of the subject, to quarrel with or severely criticise what is so congenial with its own feelings. A premature and superficial sensibility is the grave of French genius and of French taste. Beyond the momentary impulse of a lively organisation, all the rest is mechanical and pedantic; they give you rules and theories for truth and nature, the Unities for poetry, and the dead body for the living soul of art. They colour a Greek statue ill and call it a picture: they paraphrase a Greek tragedy, and overload it with long-winded speeches, and think they have a national drama of their own. Any other people would be ashamed of such preposterous pretensions. In invention, they do not get beyond models; in imitation, beyond details. Their microscopic vision hinders them from seeing nature. I observed two young students the other day near the top of Montmartre, making oil sketches of a ruinous hovel in one corner of the road. Paris lay below, glittering grey and gold (like a spider's web) in the setting sun, which shot its slant rays upon their shining canvas, and they were busy in giving the finishing touches. The little outhouse was in itself picturesque enough: it was covered with moss, which hung down in a sort of drooping form as the rain had streamed down it, and the walls were loose and crumbling in pieces. Our artists had repaired every thing: not a stone was out of its place: no traces were left of the winter's flaw in the pendent moss. One would think the bricklayer and gardener had been regularly set to work to do away every thing like sentiment or keeping in the object before them. Oh, Paris! it was indeed on this thy weak side (thy inability to connect any two ideas into one) that thy barbarous and ruthless foes entered in!—

The French have a great dislike to any thing obscure. They

cannot bear to suppose for a moment there should be any thing they do not understand: they are shockingly afraid of being *mystified*. Hence they have no idea either of mental or aerial perspective. Every thing must be distinctly made out and in the foreground; for if it is not so clear that they can take it up bit by bit, it is wholly lost upon them, and they turn away as from an unmeaning blank. This is the cause of the stiff, unnatural look of their portraits. No allowance is made for the veil that shade as well as an oblique position casts over the different parts of the face; every feature, and every part of every feature is given with the same flat effect, and it is owing to this perverse fidelity of detail, that that which is literally true, is naturally false. The side of a face seen in perspective does not present so many markings as the one that meets your eye full: but if it is put into the *vice* of French portrait, wrenched round by incorrigible affectation and conceit (that insist upon knowing all that is there, and set it down formally, though it is not to be seen), what can be the result, but that the portrait will look like a head stuck in a vice, will be flat, hard, and finished, will have the appearance of reality and at the same time look like paint; in short, will be a French portrait? That is, the artist, from a pettiness of view and want of more enlarged and liberal notions of art, comes forward not to represent nature, but like an impertinent commentator to explain what she has left in doubt, to insist on that which she passes over or touches only slightly, to throw a critical light on what she casts into shade, and to pick out the details of what she blends into masses. I wonder they allow the existence of the term *clair-obscur* at all, but it is a word; and a word is a thing they can repeat and remember. A French gentleman formerly asked me what I thought of a landscape in their Exhibition. I said I thought it too clear. He made answer that he should have conceived that to be impossible. I replied, that what I meant was, that the parts of the several objects were made out with too nearly equal distinctness all over the picture; that the leaves of the trees in shadow were as distinct as those in light, the branches of the trees at a distance as plain as of those near. The perspective arose only from the diminution of objects, and there was no interposition of air. I said, one could not see the leaves of a tree a mile off, but this, I added, appertained to a question in metaphysics. He shook his head, thinking that a young Englishman could know as little of abstruse philosophy as of fine art, and no more was said. I owe to this gentleman (whose name was Merrimee, and who I understand is still living,) a grateful sense of many friendly attentions and many useful suggestions, and I take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations.

Some one was observing of Madame Pasta's acting, that its chief merit consisted in its being natural. To which it was replied, "Not so, for that there was an ugly and a handsome nature." There is an old proverb, that "Home is home, be it never so homely:" and so it may be said of nature; that whether ugly or handsome, it is nature still. Besides beauty, there is truth, which is always one principal thing. It doubles the effect of beauty, which is mere affectation without it, and even reconciles us to deformity. Nature, the truth of nature in imitation, denotes a given object, a "foregone conclusion" in reality, to which the artist is to conform in his copy. In nature real objects exist, real causes act, which are only supposed to act in art; and it is in the subordination of the uncertain and superficial combinations of fancy to the more stable and powerful law of reality that the perfection of art consists. A painter may arrange fine colours on his palette; but if he merely does this, he does nothing. It is accidental or arbitrary. The difficulty and the charm of the combination begins with the truth of imitation, that is, with the resemblance to a given object in nature, or in other words, with the strength, coherence, and justness of our impressions, which must be verified by a reference to a known and determinate class of objects as the test. Art is so far the developement or the communication of knowledge, but there can be no knowledge unless it be of some given or standard object which exists independently of the representation and bends the will to an obedience to it. The strokes of the pencil are what the artist pleases, are mere idleness and caprice without meaning, unless they point to nature. Then they are right and wrong, true or false, as they follow in her steps and copy her style. Art must anchor in nature, or it is the sport of every breath of folly. Natural objects convey given or intelligible ideas which art embodies and represents, or it represents nothing, is a mere chimera or bubble; and, further, natural objects or events cause certain feelings, in expressing which art manifests its power, and genius its prerogative. The capacity of expressing these movements of passion is in proportion to the power with which they are felt; and this is the same as sympathy with the human mind placed in actual situations, and influenced by the real causes that are supposed to act. Genius is the power which equalises or identifies the imagination with the reality or with nature. Certain events happening to us naturally produce joy, others sorrow, and these feelings, if excessive, lead to other consequences, such as stupor or ecstasy, and express themselves by certain signs in the countenance or voice or gestures; and we admire and applaud an actress accordingly, who gives these tones and gestures as they would follow in the order of things, because we then know

that her mind has been affected in like manner, that she enters deeply into the resources of nature, and understands the riches of the human heart. For nothing else can impel and stir her up to the imitation of the truth. The way in which real causes act upon the feelings is not arbitrary, is not fanciful; it is as true as it is powerful and unforeseen; the effects can only be similar when the exciting causes have a correspondence with each other, and there is nothing like feeling *but* feeling. The sense of joy can alone produce the smile of joy; and in proportion to the sweetness, the unconsciousness, and the expansion of the last, we may be sure is the fulness and sincerity of the heart from which it proceeds. The elements of joy at least are there, in their integrity and perfection. The death or absence of a beloved object is nothing as a word, as a mere passing thought, till it comes to be dwelt upon, and we begin to feel the revulsion, the long dreary separation, the stunning sense of the blow to our happiness, as we should in reality. The power of giving this sad and bewildering effect of sorrow on the stage is derived from the force of sympathy with what we should feel in reality. That is, a great histrionic genius is one that approximates the effects of words, or of supposed situations on the mind, most nearly to the deep and vivid effect of real and inevitable ones. Joy produces tears: the violence of passion turns to childish weakness; but this could not be foreseen by study, nor taught by rules, nor mimicked by observation. Natural acting is therefore fine, because it implies and calls forth the most varied and strongest feelings that the supposed characters and circumstances can possibly give birth to: it reaches the height of the subject. The conceiving or entering into a part in this sense is every thing: the acting follows easily and of course. But art without nature is a nick-name, a word without meaning, a conclusion without any premises to go upon. The beauty of Madame Pasta's acting in Nina proceeds upon this principle. It is not what she does at any particular juncture, but she seems to be the character, and to be incapable of divesting herself of it. This is true acting: any thing else is playing tricks, may be clever and ingenious, is French Opera-dancing, recitation, heroics or hysterics—but it is not true nature or true art.

ESSAY XXIX

SIR WALTER SCOTT, RACINE, AND SHAKESPEAR

The argument at the end of the last Essay may possibly serve to throw some light on the often agitated and trite question, Whether we receive more pleasure from an Opera or a Tragedy, from the words or the pantomime of a fine dramatic representation? A musician I can conceive to declare, sincerely and conscientiously, in favour of the Opera over the theatre, for he has made it his chief or exclusive study. But I have heard some literary persons do the same; and in them it appears to me to be more the affectation of candour, than candour itself. 'The still small voice is wanting' in this preference; for however lulling or overpowering the effect of music may be at the time, we return to nature at last; it is there we find solidity and repose, and it is from this that the understanding ought to give its casting vote. Indeed there is a sense of reluctance and a sort of critical remorse in the opposite course as in giving up an old prejudice or a friend to whom we are under considerable obligations; but this very feeling of the conquest or sacrifice of a prejudice is a tacit proof that we are wrong; for it arises only out of the strong interest excited in the course of time, and involved in the nature and principle of the drama.

Words are the signs which point out and define the objects of the highest import to the human mind; and speech is the habitual, and as it were most *intimate* mode of expressing those signs, the one with which our practical and serious associations are most in unison. To give a deliberate verdict on the other side of the question seems, therefore, effeminate and unjust. A rose is delightful to the smell, a pine-apple to the taste. The nose and the palate, if their opinion were asked, might very fairly give it in favour of these against any rival sentiment; but the head and the heart cannot be expected to become accomplices against themselves. We cannot pay a worse compliment to any pleasure or pursuit than to surrender the pretensions of some other to it. Every thing stands best on its own foundation. A sound expresses, for the most part, nothing but itself; a word expresses a million of sounds. The thought or impression of the moment is one thing, and it may be more or less delightful; but beyond this, it may relate to the fate or events of a whole life, and it is this moral and intellectual perspective that words convey in its full signification and extent, and that gives a proportionable superiority in weight, in compass, and dignity to the denunciations of the tragic

Muse. The language of the understanding is necessary to a rational being. Man is dumb and prone to the earth without it. It is that which opens the vista of our past or future years. Otherwise a cloud is upon it, like the mist of the morning, like a veil of roses, an exhalation of sweet sounds, or rich distilled perfumes; no matter what—it is the nerve or organ that is chiefly touched, the sense that is wrapped in ecstacy or waked to madness; the man remains unmoved, torpid, and listless, blind to causes and consequences, which he can never remain satisfied without knowing, but seems shut up in a cell of ignorance, baffled and confounded. Sounds without meaning are like a glare of light without objects; or, an Opera is to a Tragedy what a transparency is to a picture. We are delighted because we are dazzled. But words are a key to the affections. They not only excite feelings, but they point to the *why* and *wherefore*. Causes march before them, and consequences follow after them. They are links in the chain of the universe, and the grappling-irons that bind us to it. They open the gates of Paradise, and reveal the abyss of human woe.

> 'Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
> Die in a word; such is the breath of kings.'

But in this respect, all men who have the use of speech are kings. It is words that constitute all but the present moment, but the present object. They may not and they do not give the whole of any train of impressions which they suggest; but they alone answer in any degree to the truth of things, unfold the dark labyrinth of fate, or unravel the web of the human heart; for they alone describe things in the order and relation in which they happen in human life. Men do not dance or sing through life; or an Opera or a ballet would 'come home to the bosoms and businesses of men,' in the same manner that a Tragedy or Comedy does. As it is, they do not piece on to our ordinary existence, nor go to enrich our habitual reflections. We wake from them as from a drunken dream, or a last night's debauch; and think of them no more, till the actual impression is repeated.—On the other hand, pantomime action (as an exclusive and new species of the drama) is like tragedy obtruncated and thrown on the ground, gasping for utterance and struggling for breath. It is a display of the powers of art, I should think more wonderful than satisfactory. There is a stifling sensation about it. It does not throw off 'the perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart,' but must rather aggravate and tighten the pressure.

> 'Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak,
> Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.'

This is perhaps the cause of our backwardness to admit a comparison between Mrs. Siddons and Palarini, between Shakespear and Vigano. Poetry and words speak a language proper to humanity; every other is comparatively foreign to it. The distinction here laid down is important, and should be kept sacred. Even in speaking a foreign language, words lose half their meaning, and are no longer an echo to the sense; virtue becomes a cant-term, vice sounds like an agreeable novelty, and ceases to shock. How much more must this effect happen, if we lay aside speech (our distinguishing faculty) altogether, or try to 'gabble most brutishly,' measure good and evil by the steps of a dance, and breathe our souls away in dying swan-like symphonies! But it may be asked, how does all this affect my favourite art of painting? I leave somebody else to answer that question. It will be a good exercise for their ingenuity, if not for their ingenuousness.

I proceed to the more immediate object of this Essay, which was to distinguish between the talents of Sir Walter Scott, Racine, and Shakespear. The subject occurred to me from some conversation with a French lady, who entertains a project of introducing Shakespear in France. As I demurred to the probability of this alteration in the national taste, she endeavoured to overcome my despondency by several lively arguments, and among other things, urged the instantaneous and universal success of the Scotch Novels among all ranks and conditions of the French people. As Shakespear had been performing quarantine among them for a century and a half to no purpose, I thought this circumstance rather proved the difference in the genius of the two writers than a change in the taste of the nation. Madame B. stoutly maintained the contrary opinion: and when an Englishman argues with a Frenchwoman, he has very considerable odds against him. The only advantage you have in this case is that you can plead inability to express yourself properly, and may be supposed to have a meaning where you have none. An eager manner will supply the place of distinct ideas, and you have only not to surrender in form, to appear to come off with flying colours. The not being able to make others understand me, however, prevents me from understanding myself, and I was by no means satisfied with the reasons I alleged in the present instance. I tried to mend them the next day, and the following is the result.—It was supposed at one time that the genius of the Author of Waverley was confined to Scotland; that his Novels and Tales were a bundle of national prejudices and local traditions, and that his superiority would desert him, the instant he attempted to cross the Border. He made the attempt, however, and contrary to these unfavourable prognostics, succeeded. Ivanhoe, if not equal to the very best of the Scotch Novels, is very nearly so;

and the scenery and manners are truly English. In Quentin Durward, again, he made a descent upon France, and gained new laurels, instead of losing his former ones. This seemed to bespeak a versatility of talent and a plastic power, which in the first instance had been called in question. A Scotch mist had been suspected to hang its mystery over the page; his imagination was borne up on Highland superstitions and obsolete traditions, 'sailing with supreme dominion' through the murky regions of ignorance and barbarism; and if ever at a loss, his invention was eked out and *got a cast* by means of ancient documents and the records of criminal jurisprudence or fanatic rage. The Black Dwarf was a paraphrase of the current anecdotes of David Ritchie, without any additional point or interest, and the story of Effie Deans had slept for a century in the law reports and depositions relative to the Heart of Mid-Lothian. To be sure, nothing could be finer or truer to nature; for the human heart, whenever or however it is wakened, has a stirring power in it, and as to the truth of nature, nothing can be more like nature than facts, if you know where to find them. But as to sheer invention, there appeared to be about as much as there is in the getting up the melo-dramatic representation of the Maid and the Magpye from the *Causes Celebres*. The invention is much greater and the effect is not less in Mrs. Inchbald's NATURE AND ART, where there is nothing that can have been given *in evidence* but the Trial-Scene near the end, and even that is not a legal anecdote, but a pure dramatic fiction. Before I proceed, I may as well dwell on this point a little. The heroine of the story, the once innocent and beautiful Hannah, is brought by a series of misfortunes and crimes (the effect of a misplaced attachment) to be tried for her life at the Old Bailey, and as her Judge, her former lover and seducer, is about to pronounce sentence upon her, she calls out in an agony—'Oh! not from YOU!' and as the Hon. Mr. Norwynne proceeds to finish his solemn address, falls in a swoon, and is taken senseless from the bar. I know nothing in the world so affecting as this. Now if Mrs. Inchbald had merely found this story in the Newgate-Calendar, and transplanted it into a novel, I conceive that her merit in point of genius (not to say feeling) would be less than if having all the other circumstances given, and the apparatus ready, and this exclamation alone left blank, she had filled it up from her own heart, that is, from an intense conception of the situation of the parties, so that from the harrowing recollections passing through the mind of the poor girl so circumstanced, this uncontrolable gush of feeling would burst from her lips. Just such I apprehend, generally speaking, is the amount of the difference between the genius of Shakespear and that of Sir Walter Scott. It

is the difference between *originality* and the want of it, between writing and transcribing. Almost all the finest scenes and touches, the great master-strokes in Shakespear are such as must have belonged to the class of invention, where the secret lay between him and his own heart, and the power exerted is in adding to the given materials and working something out of them: in the Author of Waverley, not all, but the principal and characteristic beauties are such as may and do belong to the class of compilation, that is, consist in bringing the materials together and leaving them to produce their own effect. Sir Walter Scott is much such a writer as the Duke of Wellington is a General (I am profaning a number of great names in this article by unequal comparisons). The one gets a hundred thousand men together, and wisely leaves it to them to fight out the battle, for if he meddled with it, he might spoil sport: the other gets an innumerable quantity of facts together, and lets them tell their own story, as best they may. The facts are stubborn in the last instance as the men are in the first, and in neither case is *the broth spoiled by the cook*. This abstinence from interfering with their resources, lest they should defeat their own success, shews great modesty and self-knowledge in the compiler of romances and the leader of armies, but little boldness or inventiveness of genius. We begin to measure Shakespear's height from the superstructure of passion and fancy he has raised out of his subject and story, on which too rests the triumphal arch of his fame: if we were to take away the subject and story, the portrait and history from the Scotch Novels, no great deal would be left worth talking about.

No one admires or delights in the Scotch Novels more than I do; but at the same time when I hear it asserted that his mind is of the same class with Shakespear's, or that he imitates nature in the same way, I confess I cannot assent to it. No two things appear to me more different. Sir Walter is an imitator of nature and nothing more; but I think Shakespear is infinitely more than this. The creative principle is every where restless and redundant in Shakespear, both as it relates to the invention of feeling and imagery; in the Author of Waverley it lies for the most part dormant, sluggish, and unused. Sir Walter's mind is full of information, but the '*o'er-informing power*' is not there. Shakespear's spirit, like fire, shines through him: Sir Walter's, like a stream, reflects surrounding objects. It is true, he has shifted the scene from Scotland into England and France, and the manners and characters are strikingly English and French; but this does not prove that they are not local, and that they are not borrowed, as well as the scenery and costume, from comparatively obvious and mechanical sources. Nobody from

reading Shakespear would know (except from the *Dramatis Personæ*) that Lear was an English king. He is merely a king and a father. The ground is common: but what a well of tears has he dug out of it! The tradition is nothing, or a foolish one. There are no data in history to go upon; no advantage is taken of costume, no acquaintance with geography or architecture or dialect is necessary: but there is an old tradition, human nature—an old temple, the human mind—and Shakespear walks into it and looks about him with a lordly eye, and seizes on the sacred spoils as his own. The story is a thousand or two years old, and yet the tragedy has no smack of antiquarianism in it. I should like very well to see Sir Walter giving us a tragedy of this kind, a huge 'globose' of sorrow, swinging round in mid-air, independent of time, place, and circumstance, sustained by its own weight and motion, and not propped up by the levers of custom, or patched up with quaint, old-fashioned dresses, or set off by grotesque backgrounds or rusty armour, but in which the mere paraphernalia and accessories were left out of the question, and nothing but the soul of passion and the pith of imagination was to be found. 'A Dukedom to a beggarly *denier*,' he would make nothing of it. Does this prove he has done nothing, or that he has not done the greatest things? No, but that he is not like Shakespear. For instance, when Lear says, 'The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me!' there is no old Chronicle of the line of Brute, no *black-letter* broadside, no tattered ballad, no vague rumour, in which this exclamation is registered; there is nothing romantic, quaint, mysterious in the objects introduced: the illustration is borrowed from the commonest and most casual images in nature, and yet it is this very circumstance that lends its extreme force to the expression of his grief by shewing that even the lowest things in creation and the last you would think of had in his imagination turned against him. All nature was, as he supposed, in a conspiracy against him, and the most trivial and insignificant creatures concerned in it were the most striking proofs of its malignity and extent. It is the depth of passion, however, or of the poet's sympathy with it, that distinguishes this character of torturing familiarity in them, invests them with corresponding importance, and suggests them by the force of contrast. It is not that certain images are surcharged with a prescriptive influence over the imagination from known and existing prejudices, so that to approach or even mention them is sure to excite a pleasing awe and horror in the mind (the effect in this case is mostly mechanical)—the whole sublimity of the passage is from the weight of passion thrown into it, and this is the poet's own doing. This is not trick, but genius. Meg Merrilies on her death-bed says,

nothing but the writhings and contortions of the heart, probed by affliction's point, as the flesh shrinks under the surgeon's knife. All its starts and flaws are but the conflicts and misgivings of hope and fear, in the most ordinary but trying circumstances. The 'Not a jot, not a jot,' has nothing to do with any old legend or prophecy. It is only the last poor effort of human hope, taking refuge on the lips. When after being infected with jealousy by Iago, he retires apparently comforted and resigned, and then without any thing having happened in the interim, returns stung to madness, crowned with his wrongs, and raging for revenge, the effect is like that of poison inflaming the blood, or like fire inclosed in a furnace. The sole principle of invention is the sympathy with the natural revulsion of the human mind, and its involuntary transition from false security to uncontrolable fury. The springs of mental passion are fretted and wrought to madness, and produce this explosion in the poet's breast. So when Othello swears 'By yon *marble* heaven,' the epithet is suggested by the hardness of his heart from the sense of injury: the texture of the outward object is borrowed from that of the thoughts: and that noble simile, 'Like the Propontic,' &c. seems only an echo of the sounding tide of passion, and to roll from the same source, the heart. The dialogue between Hubert and Arthur, and that between Brutus and Cassius are among the finest illustrations of the same principle, which indeed is every where predominant (perhaps to a fault) in Shakespear. His genius is like the Nile overflowing and enriching its banks; that of Sir Walter is like a mountain-stream rendered interesting by the picturesqueness of the surrounding scenery. Shakespear produces his most striking dramatic effects out of the workings of the finest and most intense passions; Sir Walter places his *dramatis personæ* in romantic situations, and subjects them to extraordinary occurrences, and narrates the results. The one gives us what we see and hear; the other what we *are*. Hamlet is not a person whose nativity is cast, or whose death is foretold by portents: he weaves the web of his destiny out of his own thoughts, and a very quaint and singular one it is. We have, I think, a stronger fellow-feeling with him than we have with Bertram or Waverley. All men feel and think, more or less: but we are not all foundlings, Jacobites, or astrologers. We might have been overturned with these gentlemen in a stage-coach: we seem to have been school-fellows with Hamlet at Wittenberg.

I will not press this argument farther, lest I should make it tedious, and run into questions I have no intention to meddle with. All I mean to insist upon is, that Sir Walter's *forte* is in the richness and variety of his materials, and Shakespear's in the working them up.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, RACINE, SHAKESPEAR

Sir Walter is distinguished by the most amazing retentiveness of memory, and vividness of conception of what would happen, be seen, and felt by every body in given circumstances; as Shakespear is by inventiveness of genius, by a faculty of tracing and unfolding the most hidden yet powerful springs of action, scarce recognised by ourselves, and by an endless and felicitous range of poetical illustration, added to a wide scope of reading and of knowledge. One proof of the justice of these remarks is, that whenever Sir Walter comes to a truly dramatic situation, he declines it or fails. Thus in the Black Dwarf, all that relates to the traditions respecting this mysterious personage, to the superstitious stories founded on it, is admirably done and to the life, with all the spirit and freedom of originality: but when he comes to the last scene for which all the rest is a preparation, and which is full of the highest interest and passion, nothing is done; instead of an address from Sir Edward Mauley, recounting the miseries of his whole life, and withering up his guilty rival with the recital, the Dwarf enters with a strange rustling noise, the opposite doors fly open, and the affrighted spectators rush out like the figures in a pantomime. This is not dramatic, but melo-dramatic. There is a palpable disappointment and falling-off, where the interest had been worked up to the highest pitch of expectation. The gratifying of this appalling curiosity and interest was all that was not done to Sir Walter's hand; and this he has failed to do. All that was known *about* the Black Dwarf, his figure, his desolate habitation, his unaccountable way of life, his wrongs, his bitter execrations against intruders on his privacy, the floating and exaggerated accounts of him, all these are given with a masterly and faithful hand, this is matter of description and narrative: but when the true imaginative and dramatic part comes, when the subject of this disastrous tale is to pour out the accumulated and agonising effects of all this series of wretchedness and torture upon his own mind, that is, when the person is to speak from himself and to stun us with the recoil of passion upon external agents or circumstances that have caused it, we find that it is Sir Walter Scott and not Shakespear that is his counsel-keeper, that the author is a novelist and not a poet. All that is gossipped in the neighbourhood, all that is handed down in print, all of which a drawing or an etching might be procured, is gathered together and communicated to the public: what the heart whispers to itself in secret, what the imagination tells in thunder, this alone is wanting, and this is the great thing required to make good the comparison in question. Sir Walter has not then imitated Shakespear, but he has given us nature, such as he found and could best describe it; and he resembles him only in this, that

he thinks of his characters and never of himself, and pours out his works with such unconscious ease and prodigality of resources that he thinks nothing of them, and is even greater than his own fame.

The genius of Shakespear is dramatic, that of Scott narrative or descriptive, that of Racine is didactic. He gives, as I conceive, the *commonplaces* of the human heart better than any one, but nothing or very little more. He enlarges on a set of obvious sentiments and well-known topics with considerable elegance of language and copiousness of declamation, but there is scarcely one stroke of original genius, nor any thing like imagination in his writings. He strings together a number of moral reflections, and instead of reciting them himself, puts them into the mouths of his *dramatis personæ*, who talk well about their own situations and the general relations of human life. Instead of laying bare the heart of the sufferer with all its bleeding wounds and palpitating fibres, he puts into his hand a common-place book, and he reads us a lecture from this. This is not the essence of the drama, whose object and privilege it is to give us the extreme and subtle workings of the human mind in individual circumstances, to make us sympathise with the sufferer, or feel as we should feel in his circumstances, not to tell the indifferent spectator what the indifferent spectator could just as well tell him. Tragedy is human nature tried in the crucible of affliction, not exhibited in the vague theorems of speculation. The poet's pen that paints all this in words of fire and images of gold is totally wanting in Racine. He gives neither external images nor the internal and secret workings of the human breast. Sir Walter Scott gives the external imagery or machinery of passion; Shakespear the soul; and Racine the moral or argument of it. The French object to Shakespear for his breach of the Unities, and hold up Racine as a model of classical propriety, who makes a Greek hero address a Grecian heroine as *Madame*. Yet this is not barbarous—Why? Because it is French, and because nothing that is French can be barbarous in the eyes of this frivolous and pedantic nation, who would prefer a peruke of the age of Louis XIV. to a simple Greek head-dress!

ESSAY XXX

ON DEPTH AND SUPERFICIALITY

I WISH to make this Essay a sort of study of the meaning of several words, which have at different times a good deal puzzled me. Among these are the words, *wicked*, *false* and *true*, as applied to

feeling; and lastly, *depth* and *shallowness*. It may amuse the reader to see the way in which I work out some of my conclusions underground, before throwing them up on the surface.

A great but useless thinker once asked me, if I had ever known a child of a naturally wicked disposition? and I answered, 'Yes, that there was one in the house with me that cried from morning to night, *for spite*.' I was laughed at for this answer, but still I do not repent it. It appeared to me that this child took a delight in tormenting itself and others; that the love of tyrannising over others and subjecting them to its caprices was a full compensation for the beating it received, that the screams it uttered soothed its peevish, turbulent spirit, and that it had a positive pleasure in pain from the sense of power accompanying it. *His principiis nascuntur tyranni, his carnifex animus*. I was supposed to magnify and over-rate the symptoms of the disease, and to make a childish humour into a bugbear; but, indeed, I have no other idea of what is commonly understood by wickedness than that perversion of the will or love of mischief for its own sake, which constantly displays itself (though in trifles and on a ludicrously small scale) in early childhood. I have often been reproached with extravagance for considering things only in their abstract principles, and with heat and ill-temper, for getting into a passion about what no ways concerned me. If any one wishes to see me quite calm, they may cheat me in a bargain, or tread upon my toes; but a truth repelled, a sophism repeated, totally disconcerts me, and I lose all patience. I am not, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, *a good-natured man*; that is, many things annoy me besides what interferes with my own ease and interest. I hate a lie; a piece of injustice wounds me to the quick, though nothing but the report of it reach me. Therefore I have made many enemies and few friends; for the public know nothing of well-wishers, and keep a wary eye on those that would reform them. Coleridge used to complain of my irascibility in this respect, and not without reason. Would that he had possessed a little of my tenaciousness and jealousy of temper; and then, with his eloquence to paint the wrong, and acuteness to detect it, his country and the cause of liberty might not have fallen without a struggle! The craniologists give me *the organ of local memory*, of which faculty I have not a particle, though they may say that my frequent allusions to conversations that occurred many years ago prove the contrary. I once spent a whole evening with Dr. Spurzheim, and I utterly forget all that passed, except that the Doctor *waltzed* before we parted! The only faculty I do possess, is that of a certain morbid interest in things, which makes me equally remember or anticipate by nervous analogy whatever touches it; and

for this our nostrum-mongers have no specific organ, so that I am quite left out of their system. No wonder that I should pick a quarrel with it! It vexes me beyond all bearing to see children kill flies for sport; for the principle is the same as in the most deliberate and profligate acts of cruelty they can afterwards exercise upon their fellow-creatures. And yet I let moths burn themselves to death in the candle, for it makes me mad; and I say it is in vain to prevent fools from rushing upon destruction. The author of the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' (who sees farther into such things than most people,) could not understand why I should bring a charge of *wickedness* against an infant before it could speak, merely for squalling and straining its lungs a little. If the child had been in pain or in fear, I should have said nothing, but it cried only to vent its passion and alarm the house, and I saw in its frantic screams and gestures that great baby, the world, tumbling about in its swaddling-clothes, and tormenting itself and others for the last six thousand years! The ples of ignorance, of folly, of grossness, or selfishness makes nothing either way: it is the downright love of pain and mischief for the interest it excites, and the scope it gives to an abandoned will, that is the root of all the evil, and the original sin of human nature. There is a love of power in the mind independent of the love of good, and this love of power, when it comes to be opposed to the spirit of good, and is leagued with the spirit of evil to commit it with greediness, is wickedness. I know of no other definition of the term. A person who does not foresee consequences is a fool: he who cheats others to serve himself is a knave: he who is immersed in sensual pleasure is a brute; but he alone, who has a pleasure in injuring another, or in debasing himself, that is, who does a thing with a particular relish because he ought not, is properly wicked. This character implies the fiend at the bottom of it; and is mixed up pretty plentifully (according to my philosophy) in the untoward composition of human nature. It is this craving after what is prohibited, and the force of contrast adding its zest to the violations of reason and propriety, that accounts for the excesses of pride, of cruelty, and lust; and at the same time frets and vexes the surface of life with petty evils, and plants a canker in the bosom of our daily enjoyments. Take away the enormities dictated by the wanton and pampered pride of human will, glutting itself with the sacrifice of the welfare of others, or with the desecration of its own best feelings, and also the endless bickerings, heart-burnings, and disappointments produced by the spirit of contradiction on a smaller scale, and the life of man would 'spin round on its soft axle,' unharmed and free, neither appalled by huge crimes, nor infested by insect follies. It might, indeed, be

monotonous and insipid; but it is the hankering after mischievous and violent excitement that leads to this result, that causes that indifference to good and proneness to evil, which is the very thing complained of. The griefs we suffer are for the most part of our own seeking and making; or we incur or inflict them, not to avert other impending evils, but to drive off *ennui*. There must be a spice of mischief and wilfulness thrown into the cup of our existence to give it its sharp taste and sparkling colour. I shall not go into a formal argument on this subject, for fear of being tedious, nor endeavour to enforce it by extreme cases for fear of being disgusting; but shall content myself with some desultory and familiar illustrations of it.

I laugh at those who deny that we ever wantonly or unnecessarily inflict pain upon others, when I see how fond we are of ingeniously tormenting ourselves. What is sullenness in children or grown people but revenge against ourselves? We had rather be the victims of this absurd and headstrong feeling, than give up an inveterate purpose, retract an error, or relax from the intensity of our will, whatever it may cost us. A surly man is his own enemy, and knowingly sacrifices his interest to his ill-humour, because he would at any time rather disoblige you than serve himself, as I believe I have already shewn in another place. The reason is, he has a natural aversion to everything agreeable or happy—he turns with disgust from every such feeling, as not according with the severe tone of his mind—and it is in excluding all interchange of friendly affections or kind offices that the ruling bias and the chief satisfaction of his life consist. Is not every country-town supplied with its scolds and scandal-mongers? The first cannot cease from plaguing themselves and every body about them with their senseless clamour, because the rage of words has become by habit and indulgence a thirst, a fever on their parched tongue; and the others continue to make enemies by some smart hit or sly insinuation at every third word they speak, because with every new enemy there is an additional sense of power. One man will sooner part with his friend than his joke, because the stimulus of saying a good thing is irritated, instead of being repressed, by the fear of giving offence, and by the imprudence or unfairness of the remark. Malice often takes the garb of truth. We find a set of persons who pride themselves on being *plain-spoken people*, that is, who blurt out every thing disagreeable to your face, by way of wounding your feelings and relieving their own, and this they call honesty. Even among philosophers we may have noticed those who are not contented to inform the understandings of their readers, unless they can shock their prejudices; and among poets those who tamper with the rotten parts of their subject, adding

to their fancied pretensions by trampling on the sense of shame. There are rigid reasoners who will not be turned aside from following up a logical argument by any regard to consequences, or the 'compunctious visitings of nature,' (such is their love of truth)—I never knew one of these scrupulous and hard-mouthed logicians who would not falsify the facts and distort the inference in order to arrive at a distressing and repulsive conclusion. Such is the fascination of what releases our own will from thraldom, and compels that of others reluctantly to submit to terms of our dictating! We feel our own power, and disregard their weakness and effeminacy with prodigious self-complacency. Lord Clive, when a boy, saw a butcher passing with a calf in a cart. A companion whom he had with him said, 'I should not like to be that butcher!'—'I should not like to be that calf,' replied the future Governor of India, laughing at all sympathy but that with his own sufferings. The 'wicked' Lord Lyttleton (as he was called) dreamt a little before his death that he was confined in a huge subterranean vault (the inside of this round globe) where as far as eye could see, he could discern no living object, till at last he saw a female figure coming towards him, and who should it turn out to be, but Mother Brownrigg, whom of all people he most hated! That was the very reason why he dreamt of her.

> 'You ask her crime: she whipp'd two 'prentices to death,
> And hid them in the coal-hole.'
>
> POETRY OF THE ANTI-JACOBIN.

I do not know that hers is exactly a case in point; but I conceive that in the well-known catastrophe here alluded to, words led to blows, bad usage brought on worse from mere irritation and opposition, and that, probably, even remorse and pity urged on to aggravated acts of cruelty and oppression, as the only means of drowning reflection on the past in the fury of present passion. I believe that remorse for past offences has sometimes made the greatest criminals, as the being unable to appease a wounded conscience renders men desperate; and if I hear a person express great impatience and uneasiness at some error that he is liable to, I am tolerably sure that the conflict will end in a repetition of the offence. If a man who got drunk over-night, repents bitterly next morning, he will get drunk again at night; for both in his repentance and his self-gratification he is led away by the feeling of the moment. But this is not wickedness, but despondency and want of strength of mind; and I only attribute wickedness to those who carry their wills in their hands, and who wantonly and deliberately suffer them to tyrannise

over conscience, reason, and humanity, and who even draw an additional triumph from this degrading conquest. The wars, persecutions, and bloodshed, occasioned by religion, have generally turned on the most trifling differences in forms and ceremonies; which shews that it was not the vital interests of the questions that were at stake, but that these were made a handle and pretext to exercise cruelty and tyranny on the score of the most trivial and doubtful points of faith. There seems to be a love of absurdity and falsehood as well as mischief in the human mind, and the most ridiculous as well as barbarous superstitions have on this account been the most acceptable to it. A lie is welcome to it, for it is, as it were, its own offspring; and it likes to believe, as well as act, whatever it pleases, and in the pure spirit of contradiction. The old idolatry took vast hold of the earliest ages; for to believe that a piece of painted stone or wood was a God (in the teeth of the fact) was a fine exercise of the imagination; and modern fanaticism thrives in proportion to the quantity of contradictions and nonsense it pours down the throats of the gaping multitude, and the jargon and mysticism it offers to their wonder and credulity. *Credo quia impossibile est*, is the standing motto of bigotry and superstition; that is, I believe, because to do so is a favourite act of the will, and to do so in defiance of common sense and reason enhances the pleasure and the merit (ten-fold) of this indulgence of blind faith and headstrong imagination. Methodism, in particular, which at once absolves the understanding from the rules of reasoning, and the conscience from the restraints of morality, throwing the whole responsibility upon a vicarious righteousness and an abstract belief, must, besides its rant, its vulgarity, and its amatory style, have a double charm both for saints and sinners. I have also observed a sort of *fatuity*, an indolence or indocility of the will to circumstances, which I think has a considerable share in the common affairs of life. I would willingly compound for all the mischiefs that are done me voluntarily, if I could escape those which are done me without any motive at all, or even with the best intentions. For instance, if I go to a distance where I am anxious to receive an answer to my letters, I am sure to be kept in suspense. My friends are aware of this, as also of my impatience and irritability; and they cannot prevail on themselves to put an end to this dramatic situation of the parties. There is pleasure (an innocent and well-meaning one) in keeping a friend in suspense, in not putting one's-self out of one's way for his ill humours and apprehensions (though one would not for the world do him a serious injury), as there is in dangling the finny prey at the end of a hook, or in twirling round a cock-chaffer after sticking a pin through him

at the end of a string,—there is no malice in the case, no deliberate cruelty, but the buzzing noise and the secret consciousness of superiority to any annoyance or inconvenience ourselves lull the mind into a delightful state of listless torpor and indifference. If a letter requires an immediate answer, send it by a private hand to save postage. If our messenger falls sick or breaks a leg and begs us to forward it by some other means, return it him again, and insist on its being conveyed according to its first destination. His cure may be slow but sure. In the mean time our friend can wait. We have done our duty in writing the letter, and are in no hurry to *receive* it! We know the contents, and they are matters of perfect indifference to us. No harm is meant by all this, but a great deal of mischief may accrue. There is, in short, a sluggishness and untractableness about the will, that does not easily put itself in the situation of others, and that consults its own bias best by giving itself no trouble about them. Human life is so far a game of cross-purposes. If we wish a thing to be kept secret, it is sure to transpire; if we wish it to be known, not a syllable is breathed about it. This is not meant; but it happens so from mere simplicity and thoughtlessness. No one has ever yet seen through all the intricate folds and delicate involutions of our self-love, which is wrapped up in a set of smooth flimsy pretexts like some precious jewel in covers of silver paper.

I proceed to say something of the words *false* and *true*, as applied to moral feelings. It may be argued that this is a distinction without a difference; for that as feelings only exist by being *felt*, wherever, and in so far as they exist, they must be true, and that there can be no falsehood or deception in the question. The distinction between true and false pleasure, between real and seeming good, would be thus done away with; for the reality and the appearance are here the same. And this would be the case if our sensations were simple and detached, and one had no influence on another. But it is in their secret and close dependence one on another, that the distinction here spoken of takes its rise. That then is *true* or *pure* pleasure that has no alloy or drawback in some other consideration; that is free from remorse and alarm; and that will bear the soberest reflection; because there is nothing that, upon examination, can be found acting indirectly to check and throw a damp upon it. On the other hand, we justly call those pleasures *false* and *hollow*, not merely which are momentary and ready to elude our grasp, but which, even at the time, are accompanied with such a consciousness of other circumstances as must embitter and undermine them. For instance, putting morality quite out of the question; is there not an undeniable and wide difference between the gaiety and animal spirits of one who

indulges in a drunken debauch to celebrate some unexpected stroke of good fortune, and his who does the same thing to drown care for the loss of all he is worth? The outward objects, the immediate and more obvious sensations are, perhaps, very much the same in the latter case as in the former,—the rich viands, the sparkling wines, the social merriment, the wit, the loud laughter, and the maddening brain, but the still small voice is wanting, there is a reflection at bottom, that however stifled and kept down, poisons and spoils all, even by the violent effort to keep it from intruding; the mirth in the one case is forced, in the other is natural; the one reveller is (we all know by experience) a gay, laughing wretch, the other a happy man. I profess to speak of human nature as I find it; and the circumstance that any distinction I can make may be favourable to the theories of virtue, will not prevent me from setting it down, from the fear of being charged with cant and prejudice. Even in a case less palpable than the one supposed, where some 'sweet oblivious antidote' has been applied to the mind, and it is lulled to temporary forgetfulness of its immediate cause of sorrow, does it therefore cease to gnaw the heart by stealth; are no traces of it left in the care-worn brow or face; is the state of mind the same as it was; or is there the same buoyancy, freedom, and erectness of spirit as in more prosperous circumstances? On the contrary, it is torpid, vexed, and sad, enfeebled or harassed, and weighed down by the corroding pressure of care, whether it thinks of it or not. The pulse beats slow and languid, the eye is dead; no object strikes us with the same alacrity; the avenues to joy or content are shut; and life becomes a burthen and a perplexing mystery. Even in sleep, we are haunted with the broken images of distress or the mockery of bliss, and we in vain try to still the idle tumult of the heart. The constantly tampering with the truth, the putting off the day of reckoning, the fear of looking our situation in the face, gives the mind a wandering and unsettled turn, makes our waking thoughts a troubled dream, or sometimes ends in madness, without any violent paroxysm, without any severe pang, without any *overt act*, but from that silent operation of the mind which preys internally upon itself, and works the decay of its powers the more fatally, because we dare not give it open and avowed scope. Do we not, in case of any untoward accident or event, know, when we wake in the morning, that something is the matter, before we recollect what it is? The mind no more recovers its confidence and serenity after a staggering blow, than the haggard cheek and sleepless eye their colour and vivacity, because we do not see them in the glass. Is it to be supposed that there is not a firm and healthy tone of the mind as well as of the body; or that when

this has been deranged, we do not feel pain, lassitude, and fretful impatience, though the local cause or impression may have been withdrawn? Is the state of the mind or of the nervous system, and its disposition or indisposition to receive certain impressions from the remains of others still vibrating on it, nothing? Shall we say that the laugh of a madman is sincere; or that the wit we utter in our dreams is sterling? We often feel uneasy at something, without being able to tell why, or attribute it to a wrong cause. Our unconscious impressions necessarily give a colour to, and re-act upon our conscious ones; and it is only when these two sets of feeling are in accord, that our pleasures are true and sincere; where there is a discordance and misunderstanding in this respect, they are said (not absurdly as is pretended) to be false and hollow. There is then a serenity of virtue, a peace of conscience, a confidence in success, and a pride of intellect, which subsist and are a strong source of satisfaction independently of outward and immediate objects, as the general health of the body gives a glow and animation to the whole frame, notwithstanding a scratch we may have received in our little finger, and certainly very different from a state of sickness and infirmity. The difficulty is not so much in supposing one mental cause or phenomenon to be affected and imperceptibly moulded by another, as in setting limits to the everlasting ramifications of our impressions, and in defining the obscure and intricate ways in which they communicate together. Suppose a man to labour under an habitual indigestion. Does it not oppress the very sun in the sky, beat down all his powers of enjoyment, and imprison all his faculties in a living tomb? Yet he perhaps long laboured under this disease, and felt its withering effects, before he was aware of the cause. It was not the less real on this account; nor did it interfere the less with the sincerity of his other pleasures, tarnish the face of nature, and throw a gloom over every thing. 'He was hurt, and knew it not.' Let the pressure be removed, and he breathes freely again; his spirits run with a livelier current, and he greets nature with smiles; yet the change is in him, not in her. Do we not pass the same scenery that we have visited but a little before, and wonder that no object appears the same, because we have some secret cause of dissatisfaction? Let any one feel the force of disappointed affection, and he may forget and scorn his error, laugh and be gay to all outward appearance, but the heart is not the less seared and blighted ever after. The splendid banquet does not supply the loss of appetite, nor the spotless ermine cure the itching palm, nor gold nor jewels redeem a lost name, nor pleasure fill up the void of affection, nor passion stifle conscience. Moralists and divines say true, when

they talk of the 'unquenchable fire, and the worm that dies not.' The human soul is not an invention of priests, whatever fables they have engrafted on it; nor is there an end of all our natural sentiments because French philosophers have not been able to account for them! —Hume, I think, somewhere contends that all satisfactions are equal,[1] because the cup can be no more than full. But surely, though this is the case, one cup holds more than another. As to mere negative satisfaction, the argument may be true. But as to positive satisfaction or enjoyment, I see no more how this must be equal, than how the heat of a furnace must in all cases be equally intense. Thus, for instance, there are many things with which we are contented, so as not to feel an uneasy desire after more, but yet we have a much higher relish of others. We may eat a mutton-chop without complaining, though we should consider a haunch of venison as a greater luxury if we had it. Again, in travelling abroad, the mind acquires a restless and vagabond habit. There is more of hurry and novelty, but less of sincerity and certainty in our pursuits than at home. We snatch hasty glances of a great variety of things, but want some central point of view. After making the grand tour, and seeing the finest sights in the world, we are glad to come back at last to our native place and our own fireside. Our associations with it are the most stedfast and habitual, we there feel most at home and at our ease, we have a resting place for the sole of our foot, the flutter of hope, anxiety, and disappointment is at an end, and whatever our satisfactions may be, we feel most confidence in them, and have the strongest conviction of their truth and reality. There is then a true and a false or spurious in sentiment as well as in reasoning, and I hope the train of thought I have here gone into may serve in some respects as a clue to explain it.

The hardest question remains behind. What is *depth*, and what is *superficiality*? It is easy to answer that the one is what is obvious, familiar, and lies on the surface, and that the other is recondite and hid at the bottom of a subject. The difficulty recurs—What is meant by lying on the surface, or being concealed below it, in moral and metaphysical questions? Let us try for an analogy. *Depth* consists then in tracing any number of particular effects to a general principle, or in distinguishing an unknown cause from the individual and varying circumstances with which it is implicated, and under which it lurks unsuspected. It is in fact resolving the concrete into the abstract. Now this is a task of difficulty, not only because the abstract naturally merges in the concrete, and we do not well know

[1] See also Search's 'Light of Nature Pursued,' in which the same sophism is insisted on.

how to set about separating what is thus jumbled or cemented together in a single object, and presented under a common aspect; but being scattered over a larger surface, and collected from a number of undefined sources, there must be a strong feeling of its weight and pressure, in order to dislocate it from the object and bind it into a principle. The impression of an abstract principle is faint and doubtful in each individual instance; it becomes powerful and certain only by the repetition of the experiment, and by adding the last results to our first hazardous conjectures. We thus gain a distinct hold or clue to the demonstration, when a number of vague and imperfect reminiscences are united and drawn out together, by tenaciousness of memory and conscious feeling, in one continued act. So that the depth of the understanding or reasoning in such cases may be explained to mean, that there is a pile of *implicit* distinctions analyzed from a great variety of facts and observations, each supporting the other, and that the mind, instead of being led away by the last or first object or detached view of the subject that occurs, connects all these into a whole from the top to the bottom, and by its intimate sympathy with the most obscure and random impressions that tend to the same result, evolves a principle of abstract truth. Two circumstances are combined in a particular object to produce a given effect: how shall I know which is the true cause, but by finding it in another instance? But the same effect is produced in a third object, which is without the concomitant circumstances of the first or second case. I must then look out for some other latent cause in the rabble of contradictory pretensions huddled together, which I had not noticed before, and to which I am eventually led by finding a necessity for it. But if my memory fails me, or I do not seize on the true character of different feelings, I shall make little progress, or be quite thrown out in my reckoning. Insomuch that according to the general diffusion of any element of thought or feeling, and its floating through the mixed mass of human affairs, do we stand in need of a greater quantity of that refined experience I have spoken of, and of a quicker and firmer tact in connecting or distinguishing its results. However, I must make a reservation here. Both knowledge and sagacity are required, but sagacity abridges and anticipates the labour of knowledge, and sometimes jumps instinctively at a conclusion; that is, the strength or fineness of the feeling, by association or analogy, sooner elicits the recollection of a previous and forgotten one in different circumstances, and the two together, by a sort of internal evidence and collective force, stamp any proposed solution with the character of truth or falsehood. Original strength of impression is often (in usual questions at least) a substitute for accumulated weight of experience; and

intensity of feeling is so far synonimous with depth of understanding. It is that which here gives us a contentious and palpable consciousness of whatever affects it in the smallest or remotest manner, and leaves to us the hidden springs of thought and action through our sensibility and jealousy of whatever touches them.—To give an illustration or two of this very abstruse subject.

Elegance is a word that means something different from ease, grace, beauty, dignity; yet it is akin to all these; but it seems more particularly to imply a sparkling brilliancy of effect with finish and precision. We do not apply the term to great things; we should not call an epic poem or a head of Jupiter *elegant*, but we speak of an elegant copy of verses, an elegant head-dress, an elegant fan, an elegant diamond brooch, or bunch of flowers. In all these cases (and others where the same epithet is used) there is something little and comparatively trifling in the objects and the interest they inspire. So far I deal chiefly in examples, conjectures, and negatives. But this is far from a definition. I think I know what personal beauty is, because I can say in one word what I mean by it, viz. *harmony of form*; and this idea seems to me to answer to all the cases to which the term personal beauty, is ever applied. Let us see if we cannot come to something equally definitive with respect to the other phrase. Sparkling effect, finish, and precision, are characteristic, as I think, of elegance, but as yet I see no reason why they should be so, any more than why blue, red, and yellow, should form the colours of the rainbow. I want a common idea as a link to connect them, or to serve as a substratum for the others. Now suppose I say that elegance is beauty, or at least *the pleasurable* in little things: we then have a ground to rest upon at once. For elegance being beauty or pleasure in little or slight impressions, precision, finish, and polished smoothness follow from this definition as matters of course. In other words, for a thing that is little to be beautiful, or at any rate to please,[1] it must have precision of outline, which in larger masses and gigantic forms is not so indispensable. In what is small, the parts must be finished, or they will offend. Lastly, in what is momentary and evanescent, as in dress, fashions, &c. there must be a glossy and sparkling effect, for brilliancy is the only virtue of novelty. That is to say, by getting the primary conditions or essential qualities of elegance in all circumstances whatever, we see how these branch off into minor divisions in relation to form, details, colour, surface, &c. and rise from a common ground of abstraction into all the variety of consequences and examples. The Hercules is not elegant; the

[1] I have said before that this is a study, not a perfect demonstration. I am no merchant in metaphysics.

Venus is simply beautiful. The French, whose ideas of beauty or grandeur never amount to more than an elegance, have no relish for Rubens, nor will they understand this definition.

When Sir Isaac Newton saw the apple fall, it was a very simple and common observation, but it suggested to his mind the law that holds the universe together. What then was the process in this case? In general, when we see any thing fall, we have the idea of a particular direction, of *up* and *down* associated with the motion by invariable and every day's experience. The earth is always (as we conceive) under our feet, and the sky above our heads, so that according to this local and habitual feeling, all heavy bodies must everlastingly fall in the same direction downwards, or parallel to the upright position of our bodies. Sir Isaac Newton by a bare effort of abstraction, or by a grasp of mind comprehending all the possible relations of things, got rid of this prejudice, turned the world as it were on its back, and saw the apple fall not *downwards*, but simply *towards* the earth, so that it would fall *upwards* on the same principle, if the earth were above it, or towards it at any rate in whatever direction it lay. This highly abstracted view of the case answered to all the phenomena of nature, and no other did; and this view he arrived at by a vast power of comprehension, retaining and reducing the contradictory phenomena of the universe under one law, and counteracting and banishing from his mind that almost invincible and instinctive association of *up* and *down* as it relates to the position of our own bodies and the gravitation of all others to the earth in the same direction. From a circumscribed and partial view we make that, which is general, particular: the great mathematician here spoken of, from a wide and comprehensive one, made it general again, or he perceived the essential condition or cause of a general effect, and that which acts indispensably in all circumstances, separate from other accidental and arbitrary ones.

I lately heard an anecdote related of an American lady (one of two sisters) who married young and well, and had several children; her sister, however, was married soon after herself to a richer husband, and had a larger (if not finer) family, and after passing several years of constant repining and wretchedness, she died at length of pure envy. The circumstance was well known, and generally talked of. Some one said on hearing this, that it was a thing that could only happen in America; that it was a trait of the republican character and institutions, where alone the principle of mutual jealousy, having no high and distant objects to fix upon, and divert it from immediate and private mortifications, seized upon the happiness or outward advantages even of the nearest connexions as its natural food, and

having them constantly before its eyes, gnawed itself to death upon them. I assented to this remark, and I confess it struck me as shewing a deep insight into human nature. Here was a sister envying a sister, and that not for objects that provoke strong passion, but for common and contentional advantages, till it ends in her death. They were also represented as good and respectable people. How then is this extraordinary developement of an ordinary human frailty to be accounted for? From the peculiar circumstances? These were the country and state of society. It was in America that it happened. The democratic level, the flatness of imagery, the absence of those towering and artificial heights that in old and monarchical states act as conductors to attract and carry off the splenetic humours and rancorous hostilities of a whole people, and to make common and petty advantages sink into perfect insignificance, were full in the mind of the person who suggested the solution; and in this dearth of every other mark or vent for it, it was felt intuitively, that the natural spirit of envy and discontent would fasten upon those that were next to it, and whose advantages, there being no great difference in point of elevation, would gall in proportion to their proximity and repeated recurrence. The remote and exalted advantages of birth and station in countries where the social fabric is constructed of lofty and unequal materials, necessarily carry the mind out of its immediate and domestic circle; whereas, take away those objects of imaginary spleen and moody speculation, and they leave, as the inevitable alternative, the envy and hatred of our friends and neighbours at every advantage we possess, as so many eye-sores and stumbling-blocks in their way, where these selfish principles have not been curbed or given way altogether to charity and benevolence. The fact, as stated in itself, is an anomaly: as thus explained, by combining it with a general state of feeling in a country, it seems to point out a great principle in society. Now this solution would not have been attained but for the deep impression which the operation of certain general causes of moral character had recently made, and the quickness with which the consequences of its removal were felt. I might give other instances, but these will be sufficient to explain the argument, or set others upon elucidating it more clearly.

Acuteness is depth, or sagacity in connecting individual effects with individual causes, or *vice versâ*, as in stratagems of war, policy, and a knowledge of character and the world. Comprehension is the power of combining a vast number of particulars in some one view, as in mechanics, or the game of chess, but without referring them to any abstract or general principle. A *common-place* differs from an abstract discourse in this, that it is trite and vague, instead of being

new and profound. It is a common-place at present to say that heavy bodies fall by attraction. It would always have been one to say that this falling is the effect of a law of nature, or the will of God. This is assigning a general but not adequate cause.

The depth of passion is where it takes hold of circumstances too remote or indifferent for notice from the force of association or analogy, and turns the current of other passions by its own. Dramatic power is the depth of the knowledge of the human heart, is chiefly shewn in tracing this effect. For instance, the fondness displayed by a mistress for a lover (as she is about to desert him for a rival) is not mere hypocrisy or art to deceive him, but nature, or the reaction of her pity, or parting tenderness towards a person she is about to injure, but does not absolutely hate. Shakespear is the only dramatic author who has laid open this reaction or involution of the passions in a manner worth speaking of. The rest are common place declaimers, and may be very fine poets, but not deep philosophers.—There is a depth even in superficiality, that is, the affections cling round obvious and familiar objects, not recondite and remote ones; and the intense continuity of feeling thus obtained, forms the depth of sentiment. It is that that redeems poetry and romance from the charge of superficiality. The habitual impressions of things are, as to feeling, the most refined ones. The painter also in his mind's eye penetrates beyond the surface or husk of the object, and sees into a labyrinth of forms, an abyss of colour. My head has grown giddy in following the windings of the drawing in Raphael, and I have gazed on the breadth of Titian, where infinite imperceptible gradations were blended in a common mass, as into a dazzling mirror. This idea is more easily transferred to Rembrandt's chiaro-scura, where the greatest clearness and the nicest distinctions are observed in the midst of obscurity. In a word, I suspect depth to be that strength, and at the same time subtlety of impression, which will not suffer the slightest indication of thought or feeling to be lost, and gives warning of them, over whatever extent of surface they are diffused, or under whatever disguises of circumstances they lurk.

ESSAY XXXI

ON RESPECTABLE PEOPLE

There is not any term that is oftener misapplied, or that is a stronger instance of the abuse of language, than this same word *respectable*. By a *respectable man* is generally meant a person whom there is no

reason for respecting, or none that we choose to name: for if there is any good reason for the opinion we wish to express, we naturally assign it as the ground of his respectability. If the person whom you are desirous to characterise favourably, is distinguished for his good-nature, you say that he is a good-natured man; if by his zeal to serve his friends, you call him a friendly man; if by his wit or sense, you say that he is witty or sensible; if by his honesty or learning, you say so at once; but if he is none of these, and there is no one quality which you can bring forward to justify the high opinion you would be thought to entertain of him, you then take the question for granted, and jump at a conclusion, by observing gravely, that 'he is a very respectable man.' It is clear, indeed, that where we have any striking and generally admitted reasons for respecting a man, the most obvious way to ensure the respect of others, will be to mention his estimable qualities; where these are wanting, the wisest course must be to say nothing about them, but to insist on the general inference which we have our particular reasons for drawing, only vouching for its authenticity. If, for instance, the only motive we have for thinking or speaking well of another is, that he gives us good dinners, as this is not a valid reason to those who do not, like us, partake of his hospitality, we may (without going into particulars) content ourselves with assuring them, that he is a most respectable man: if he is a slave to those above him, and an oppressor of those below him, but sometimes makes us the channels of his bounty or the tools of his caprice, it will be as well to say nothing of the matter, but to confine ourselves to the safer generality, that he is a person of the highest respectability: if he is a low dirty fellow, who has amassed an immense fortune, which he does not know what to do with, the possession of it alone will guarantee his respectability, if we say nothing of the manner in which he has come by it, or in which he spends it. A man may be a knave or a fool, or both (as it may happen) and yet be a most respectable man, in the common and authorized sense of the term, provided he saves appearances, and does not give common fame a handle for no longer keeping up the imposture. The best title to the character of respectability lies in the convenience of those who echo the cheat, and in the conventional hypocrisy of the world. Any one may lay claim to it who is willing to give himself airs of importance, and can find means to divert others from inquiring too strictly into his pretensions. It is a disposable commodity,—not a part of the man, that sticks to him like his skin, but an appurtenance, like his goods and chattels. It is meat, drink, and clothing to those who take the benefit of it by allowing others the credit. It is the current coin, the circulating medium, in which the factitious inter-

But this is the heraldry of poets, not of the world. In fact, the only way for a poet now-a-days to emerge from the obscurity of poverty and genius, is to prostitute his pen, turn literary pimp to some borough-mongering lord, canvass for him at elections, and by this means aspire to the same importance, and be admitted on the same respectable footing with him as his valet, his steward, or his practising attorney. A Jew, a stock-jobber, a war-contractor, a successful monopolist, a Nabob, an India Director, or an African slave-dealer, are all very respectable people in their turn. A Member of Parliament is not only respectable, but *honourable*;—'all honourable men!' Yet this circumstance, which implies such a world of respect, really means nothing. To say of any one that he is a Member of Parliament, is to say, at the same time, that he is not at all distinguished as such. No body ever thought of telling you, that Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt were Members of Parliament. Such is the constant difference between names and things.

The most mischievous and offensive use of this word has been in politics. By respectable people (in the fashionable cant of the day) are meant those who have not a particle of regard for any one but themselves, who have feathered their own nests, and only want to lie snug and warm in them. They have been set up and appealed to as the only friends of their country and the Constitution, while in truth they were friends to nothing but their own interest. With them all is well, if they are well off. They are raised by their lucky stars above the reach of the distresses of the community, and are cut off by their situation and sentiments, from any sympathy with their kind. They would see their country ruined before they would part with the least of their superfluities. Pampered in luxury and their own selfish comforts, they are proof against the calls of patriotism, and the cries of humanity. They would not get a scratch with a pin to save the universe. They are more affected by the overturning of a plate of turtle-soup than by the starving of a whole county. The most desperate characters, picked from the most necessitous and depraved classes, are not worse judges of politics than your true, staunch, thorough-paced 'lives and fortunes men,' who have what is called a *stake* in the country, and see everything through the medium of their cowardly and unprincipled hopes and fears.—London is, perhaps, the only place in which the standard of respectability at all varies from the standard of money. There things go as much by appearance as by weight; and he may be said to be a respectable man who cuts a certain figure in company by being dressed in the fashion, and venting a number of common-place things with tolerable grace and fluency. If a person there brings a certain share of information

and good manners into mixed society, it is not asked, when he leaves it, whether he is rich or not. Lords and fiddlers, authors and common councilmen, editors of newspapers and parliamentary speakers meet together, and the difference is not so much marked as one would suppose. To be an Edinburgh Reviewer is, I suspect, the highest rank in modern literary society.

ESSAY XXXII

ON THE JEALOUSY AND THE SPLEEN OF PARTY

'It is michin-malico, and means mischief.'—HAMLET.

I WAS sorry to find the other day, on coming to Vevey, and looking into some English books at a library there, that Mr. Moore had taken an opportunity, in his 'Rhymes on the Road,' of abusing Madame Warens, Rousseau, and men of genius in general. *It's an ill bird*, as the proverb says. This appears to me, I confess, to be *pick-thank* work, as needless as it is ill-timed, and, considering from whom it comes, particularly unpleasant. In conclusion, he thanks God with the Levite, that 'he is not one of those,' and would rather be any thing, a worm, the meanest thing that crawls, than numbered among those who give light and law to the world by an excess of fancy and intellect.[1] Perhaps Posterity may take him at his word, and no more trace be found of his 'Rhymes' upon the onward tide of time than of

'the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white, then melts for ever!'

It might be some increasing consciousness of the frail tenure by which he holds his rank among the great heirs of Fame, that urged our Bard to pawn his reversion of immortality for an indulgent smile of patrician approbation, as he raised his puny arm against 'the mighty dead,' to lower by a flourish of his pen the aristocracy of letters

[1] 'Out on the craft—I'd rather be
One of those hinds that round me tread,
With just enough of sense to see
The noon-day sun that's o'er my head,
Than thus with high-built genius curs'd,
That hath no heart for its foundation,
Be all at once that's brightest—worst—
Sublimest—meanest in creation.'
RHYMES ON THE ROAD.

nearer to the level of the aristocracy of rank—two ideas that keep up a perpetual *see-saw* in Mr. Moore's mind like buckets in a well, and to which he is always ready to lend a helping hand, according as he is likely to be hoisted up, or in danger of being let down with either of them. The mode in which our author proposes to correct the extravagance of public opinion, and qualify the interest taken in such persons as Rousseau and Madame de Warens, is singular enough, and savours of the late unlucky bias of his mind:—it is by referring us to what the well-bred people in the neighbourhood thought of Rousseau and his pretensions a hundred years ago or thereabouts. '*So shall their anticipation prevent our discovery!*'

> 'And doubtless 'mong the grave and good
> And gentle of their neighbourhood,
> *If known at all*, they were but known
> As strange, low people, low and bad,
> Madame herself to footmen prone,
> And her young *pauper*, all but mad.'

This is one way of reversing the judgment of posterity, and setting aside the *ex-post-facto* evidence of taste and genius. So, after 'all that's come and gone yet,'—after the anxious doubts and misgivings of his mind as to his own destiny—after all the pains he took to form himself in solitude and obscurity—after the slow dawn of his faculties, and their final explosion, that like an eruption of another Vesuvius, dazzling all men with its light, and leaving the burning lava behind it, shook public opinion, and overturned a kingdom—after having been 'the gaze and shew of the time'—after having been read by all classes, criticised, condemned, admired in every corner of Europe—after bequeathing a name that at the end of half a century is never repeated but with emotion as another name for genius and misfortune—after having given us an interest in his feelings as in our own, and drawn the veil of lofty imagination or of pensive regret over all that relates to his own being, so that we go a pilgrimage to the places where he lived, and recall the names he loved with tender affection (worshipping at the shrines where his fires were first kindled, and where the purple light of love still lingers—'Elysian beauty, melancholy grace!')—after all this, and more, instead of taking the opinion which one half of the world have formed of Rousseau with eager emulation, and the other have been forced to admit in spite of themselves, we are to be sent back by Mr. Moore's eaves-dropping Muse to what the people in the neighbourhood thought of him (*if* ever they thought of him at all) before he had shewn any one proof of what he was, as the fairer test of truth and candour, and as coming

nearer to the standard of greatness, that is, of *something asked to dine out*, existing in the author's own mind.

'This, this is the unkindest cut of all.'

Mr. Moore takes the inference which he chuses to attribute to the neighbouring gentry concerning 'the pauper lad,' namely, that 'he was mad' because he was poor, and flings it to the passengers out of a landau and four as the true version of his character by the fashionable and local authorities of the time. He need not have gone out of his way to Charmettes merely to drag the reputations of Jean Jacques and his mistress after him, chained to the car of aristocracy, as 'people low and bad,' on the strength of his enervated sympathy with the genteel conjectures of the day as to what and who they were—we have better and more authentic evidence. What would he say if this method of neutralising the voice of the public were applied to himself, or to his friend Mr. Chantry; if we were to deny that the one ever rode in an open carriage *tête-à-tête* with a lord, because his father stood behind a counter, or were to ask the sculptor's customers when he drove a milk-cart what we are to think of his bust of Sir Walter? *It will never do.* It is the peculiar hardship of genius not to be recognised with the first breath it draws—often not to be admitted even during its life-time—to make its way slow and late, through good report and evil report, 'through clouds of detraction, of envy and lies'—to have to contend with the injustice of fortune, with the prejudices of the world,

'Rash judgments and the sneers of selfish men'—

to be shamed by personal defects, to pine in obscurity, to be the butt of pride, the jest of fools, the bye-word of ignorance and malice—to carry on a ceaseless warfare between the consciousness of inward worth and the slights and neglect of others, and to hope only for its reward in the grave and in the undying voice of fame:—and when, as in the present instance, that end has been marvellously attained and a final sentence has been passed, would any one but Mr. Moore wish to shrink from it, to revive the injustice of fortune and the world, and to abide by the idle conjectures of a fashionable *coterie* empannelled on the spot, who would come to the same shallow conclusion whether the individual in question were an idiot or a God? There is a degree of gratuitous impertinence and frivolous servility in all this not easily to be accounted for or forgiven.

There is something more particularly offensive in the cant about 'people low and bad' applied to the intimacy between Rousseau and Madame Warens, inasmuch as the volume containing this nice strain

of morality is dedicated to Lord Byron, who was at that very time living on the very same sentimental terms with an Italian lady of rank, and whose Memoirs Mr. Moore has since thought himself called upon to suppress, out of regard to his Lordship's character and to that of his friends, most of whom were not "low people." Is it quality, not charity, that with Mr. Moore covers all sorts of slips?

> "But 'tis the fall degrades her to a whore;
> Let Greatness own her, and she's mean no more!"

What also makes the *dead-set* at the heroine of the "Confessions" seem the harder measure, is, that it is preceded by an effusion to Mary Magdalen in the devotional style of Madame Guyon, half amatory, half pious, but so tender and rapturous that it dissolves Canova's marble in tears, and heaves a sigh from Guido's canvas. The melting pathos that trickles down one page is frozen up into the most rigid morality, and hangs like an icicle upon the next. Here Thomas Little smiles and weeps in ecstacy; there Thomas Brown (not "the younger," but the elder surely) frowns disapprobation, and meditates dislike. Why, it may be asked, does Mr. Moore's insect-Muse always hover round this alluring subject, "now in glimmer and now in gloom"—now basking in the warmth, now writhing with the smart—now licking his lips at it, now making wry faces—but always fidgetting and flumering about the same gaudy, luscious topic, either in flimsy raptures or trumpery horrors? I hate, for my own part, this aberration of meretricious rhapsodies and methodistical cant, though the one generally ends in the other. One would imagine that the author of "Rhymes on the Road" had lived too much in the world, and understood the tone of good society too well to link the phrases "*people low* and *bad*" together as synonymous. But the crossing the Alps has, I believe, given some of our fashionables a shivering-fit of morality, as the sight of Mont Blanc convinced our author of the Being of a God[1]—they are seized with an amiable horror and remorse for the vices of others (of course so much worse than their own,) so that several of our *blue-stockings* have got the *blue-devils*, and Mr. Moore, as the Squire of Dames, chimes in with the cue that is given him. The panic, however, is not universal. He must have heard of the romping, the languishing, the masquerading, the

[1] The poet himself, standing at the bottom of it, however diminutive in appearance, was a much greater proof of his own argument than a huge, shapeless lump of ice. But the immensity, the solitude, the barrenness, the immoveableness of the masses, so different from the whirl, the tinsel, the hum and the ephemeral nature of the objects which occupy and dissipate his ordinary attention, gave Mr. Moore a turn for reflection, and brought before him the abstract idea of infinity and of the cause of all things.

intriguing, and the Platonic attachments of English ladies of the highest quality and Italian Opera-singers. He must know what Italian manners are—what they were a hundred years ago, at Florence or at Turin,[1] better than I can tell him. Not a word does he hint on the subject. No: the elevation and splendour of the examples dazzle him; the extent of the evil overpowers him; and he chooses to make Madame Warens the scape-goat of his little budget of querulous casuistry, as if her errors and irregularities were to be set down to the account of the genius of Rousseau and of modern philosophy, instead of being the result of the example of the privileged class to which she belonged, and of the licentiousness of the age and country in which she lived. She appears to have been a handsome, well-bred, fascinating, condescending *demirep* of that day, like any of the author's fashionable acquaintances in the present, but the eloquence of her youthful *protegè* has embalmed her memory, and thrown the illusion of fancied perfections and of hallowed regrets over her frailties; and it is this that Mr. Moore cannot excuse, and that draws down upon her his pointed hostility of attack, and rouses all the venom of his moral indignation. Why does he not, in like manner, pick a quarrel with that celebrated monument in the *Pere la Chaise*, brought there

'From Paraclete's white walls and silver springs;'

or why does he not leave a lampoon, instead of an elegy, on Laura's tomb? The reason is, he *dare* not. The cant of morality is not here strong enough to stem the opposing current of the cant of sentiment, to which he by turns commits the success of his votive rhymes.

Not content with stripping off the false colours from the frail fair (one of whose crimes it is not to have been young) the poet makes a 'swan-like end,' and falls foul of men of genius, fancy, and sentiment in general, as impostors and mountebanks, who feel the least themselves of what they describe and make others feel. I beg leave to enter my flat and peremptory protest against this view of the matter, as an impossibility. I am not absolutely blind to the weak sides of authors, poets, and philosophers (for ''tis my vice to spy into abuses') but that they are not generally in earnest in what they write, that they are not the dupes of their own imaginations and feelings, before they turn the heads of the world at large, is what I must utterly deny. So far from the likelihood of any such antipathy between their sentiments and their professions, from their being recreants to truth

[1] Madame Warens resided for some time at Turin, and was pensioned by the Court.

even with him. But perhaps Thomson's works may not come under the intention of Mr. Moore's strictures, as they were never (like Rousseau's) excluded from the libraries of English Noblemen!

> 'Books, dreams are each a world, and books, we know,
> Are a substantial world, both pure and good;
> Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
> Our pastime and our happiness may grow.'

Let me then conjure the gentle reader, who has ever felt an attachment to books, not hastily to divorce them from their authors. Whatever love or reverence may be due to the one, is equally owing to the other. The volume we prize may be little, old, shabbily bound, an imperfect copy, does not step down from the shelf to give us a graceful welcome, nor can it extend a hand to serve us in extremity, and so far may be like the author: but whatever there is of truth or good or of proud consolation or of cheering hope in the one, all this existed in a greater degree in the imagination and the heart and brain of the other. To cherish the work and *damn* the author is as if the traveller who slakes his thirst at the running stream, should revile the spring-head from which it gushes. I do not speak of the degree of passion felt by Rousseau towards Madame Warens, nor of his treatment of her, nor her's of him: but that he thought of her for years with the tenderest yearnings of affection and regret, and felt towards her all that he has made his readers feel, this I cannot for a moment doubt.[1] So far, then, he is no impostor or juggler. Still less could he have given a new and personal character to the literature of Europe, and changed the tone of sentiment and the face of society, if he had not felt the strongest interest in persons and things, or had been the heartless pretender he is sometimes held out to us.

The tone of politics and of public opinion has undergone a considerable and curious change, even in the few short years I can remember. In my time, that is, in the early part of it, the love of liberty (at least by all those whom I came near) was regarded as the dictate of common sense and common honesty. It was not a question of depth or learning, but an instinctive feeling, prompted by a certain generous warmth of blood in every one worthy the name of

[1] What the nature of his attachment was is probably best explained by his cry, 'Ah! voilà de la perversité!' with which all Europe has rung; or by the beginning of the last of the 'Reveries of a Solitary Walker,' 'Aujourd'hui jour de Pâques fleuries, il y a précisément cinquante ans de ma première connoissance avec Madame de Warens.' But it is very possible our lively Anacreon does not understand these long-winded retrospects; and agrees with his friend Lord Byron, who professed never to feel any thing seriously for more than a day!

Briton. A man would as soon avow himself to be a pimp or a pick-pocket as a tool or a pander to corruption. This was the natural and at the same time the national feeling. Patriotism was not at variance with philanthropy. To take an interest in humanity, it was only thought necessary to have the form of a man: to espouse its cause, nothing was wanting but to be able to articulate the name. It was not inquired what coat a man wore, where he was born or bred, what was his party or his profession, to qualify him to vote on this broad and vital question—to take his share in advancing it, was the undisputed birth-right of every free-man. No one was too high or too low, no one was too wise or too simple to join in the common cause. It would have been construed into lukewarmness and cowardice not to have done so. The voice as of one crying in the wilderness had gone forth—'Peace on earth, and good-will towards men!' The dawn of a new era was at hand. Might was no longer to lord it over right, opinion to march hand in hand with falsehood. The heart swelled at the mention of a public as of a private wrong—the brain teemed with projects for the benefit of mankind. History, philosophy, all well-intentioned and well-informed men agreed in the same conclusion. If a good was to be done, let it —if a truth was to be told, let it! There could be no harm in that: it was only necessary to distinguish right from wrong, truth from lies, to know to which we should give the preference. A rose was then doubly sweet, the notes of a thrush went to the heart, there was 'a witchery in the soft blue sky' because we could feel and enjoy such things by the privilege of our common nature, 'not by the sufferance of supernal power,' and because the common feelings of our nature were not trampled upon and sacrificed in scorn to shew and external magnificence. Humanity was no longer to be crushed like a worm, as it had hitherto been—power was to be struck at, wherever it reared its serpent crest. It had already roamed too long unchecked. Kings and priests had played the game of violence and fraud for thousands of years into each other's hands, on pretences that were now seen through, and were no farther feasable. The despot's crown appeared tarnished and blood-stained: the cowl of superstition fell off, that had been so often made a cloak for tyranny. The doctrine of the *Jus Divinum* 'squeaked and gibbered in our streets,' ashamed to shew its head: Holy Oil had lost its efficacy, and was laughed at as an exploded mummery. Mr. Locke had long ago (in his *Treatise of Government*, written at the express desire of King William) settled the question as it affected our own Revolution (and naturally every other) in favour of liberal principles as a part of the law of the land and as identified with the existing succession.

Blackstone and De Lolme (the loudest panegyrists of the English Constitution) founded their praise on the greater alloy of Liberty implied in it. Tyranny was on the wane, at least in theory: public opinion might be said to rest on an inclined plane, tending more and more from the heights of arbitrary power and individual pretension to the level of public good; and no man of common sense or reading would have had the face to object as a bar to the march of truth and freedom—

'The right divine of Kings to govern wrong!'

No one had then dared to answer the claim of a whole nation to the choice of a free government with the impudent taunt, 'Your King is at hand!' Mr. Burke had in vain sung his *requiem* over the 'age of chivalry:' Mr. Pitt mouthed out his speeches on the existence of social order to no purpose: Mr. Malthus had not cut up Liberty by the roots by passing 'the grinding law of necessity' over it, and entailing vice and misery on all future generations as their happiest lot: Mr. Ricardo had not pared down the schemes of visionary projectors and idle talkers into the form of Rent: Mr. Southey had not surmounted his cap of Liberty with the laurel wreath; nor Mr. Wordsworth proclaimed Carnage as 'God's Daughter;' nor Mr. Coleridge, to patch up a rotten cause, written the Friend. Every thing had not then been done (or had, 'like a devilish engine, back recoiled upon itself') to stop the progress of truth, to stifle the voice of humanity, to break in pieces and defeat opinion by sophistry, calumny, intimidation, by tampering with the interests of the proud and selfish, the prejudices of the ignorant, the fears of the timid, the scruples of the good, and by resorting to every subterfuge which art could devise to perpetuate the abuses of power. Freedom then stood erect, crowned with orient light, 'with looks commercing with the skies:'—since then, she has fallen by the sword and by slander, whose edge is sharper than the sword; by her own headlong zeal or the watchful malice of her foes, and through that one unrelenting purpose in the hearts of Sovereigns to baffle, degrade, and destroy the People, whom they had hitherto considered as their property, and whom they now saw (oh! unheard-of presumption) setting up a claim to be free. This claim has been once more set aside, annulled, overthrown, trampled upon with every mark of insult and ignominy, in word or deed; and the consequence has been that all those who had stood forward to advocate it have been hurled into the air with it, scattered, stunned, and have never yet recovered from their confusion and dismay. The shock was great, as it was unexpected; the surprise extreme: Liberty became a sort of bye-word; and such was the violence of party-spirit and the desire to retaliate former indignities, that all

those who had ever been attached to the fallen cause seemed to have suffered contamination and to labour under a stigma. The PARTY (both of Whigs and Reformers) were left completely in the lurch; and (what may appear extraordinary at first sight) instead of wishing to strengthen their cause, took every method to thin their ranks and make the terms of admission to them more difficult. In proportion as they were scouted by the rest of the world, they grew more captious, irritable, and jealous of each other's pretensions. The general obloquy was so great that every one was willing to escape from it in the crowd, or to curry favour with the victors by denouncing the excesses or picking holes in the conduct of his neighbours. While the victims of popular prejudice and ministerial persecution were eagerly sought for, no one was ready to own that he was one of the set. Unpopularity 'doth part the flux of company.' Each claimed an exception for himself or party, was glad to have any loop-hole to hide himself from this 'open and apparent shame,' and to shift the blame from his own shoulders, and would by no means be mixed up with Jacobins and Levellers—the terms with which their triumphant opponents qualified indiscriminately all those who differed with them in any degree. Where the cause was so disreputable, the company should be select. As the flood-gates of Billingsgate abuse and courtly malice were let loose, each *coterie* drew itself up in a narrower circle: the louder and more sweeping was the storm of Tory spite without, the finer were the distinctions, the more fastidious the precautions used within. The Whigs, completely cowed by the Tories, threw all the odium on the Reformers; who in return with equal magnanimity vented their stock of spleen and vituperative rage on the Whigs. The common cause was forgot in each man's anxiety for his own safety and character. If any one, bolder than the rest, wanted to ward off the blows that fell in showers, or to retaliate on the assailants, he was held back or turned out as one who longed to bring an old house about their ears. One object was to give as little offence as possible to 'the powers that be'—to lie by, to trim, to shuffle, to wait for events, to be severe on our own errors, just to the merits of a prosperous adversary, and not to throw away the scabbard or make reconciliation hopeless. Just as all was hushed up, and the 'chop-fallen' Whigs were about to be sent for to Court, a great cloutering blow from an incorrigible Jacobin might spoil all, and put off the least chance of anything being done 'for the good of he country,' till another reign or the next century. But the great thing was to be genteel, and keep out the rabble. They that touch pitch are defiled. 'No connection with the mob,' was labelled on

the back of every friend of the People. Every pitiful retainer of Opposition took care to disclaim all affinity with such fellows as Hunt, Carlile, or Cobbett.[1] As it was the continual drift of the Ministerial writers to confound the different *grades* of their antagonists, so the chief dread of the Minority was to be confounded with the populace, the *Canaille*, &c. They would be thought neither *with* the Government or *of* the People. They are an awkward mark to hit at. It is true they have no superfluous popularity to throw away upon others, and they may be so far right in being shy in the choice of their associates. They are critical in examining volunteers into the service. It is necessary to ask leave of a number of circumstances equally frivolous and vexatious, before you can enlist in their skeleton-regiment. Thus you must have a good coat to your back; for they have no uniform to give you. You must bring a character in your pocket; for they have no respectability to lose. If you have any scars to shew, you had best hide them, or procure a certificate for your pacific behaviour from the opposite side, with whom they wish to stand well, and not to be always wounding the feelings of distinguished individuals. You must have vouchers that you were neither born, bred, nor reside within the Bills of Mortality, or Mr. Theodore Hook will cry 'Cockney'! You must have studied at one or other of the English Universities, or Mr. Croker will prove every third word to be a *Bull*. If you are a patriot and a martyr to your principles, this is a painful consideration, and must act as a draw-back to your pretensions, which would have a more glossy and creditable appearance, if they had never been tried. If you are a lord or a dangler after lords, it is well: the glittering star hides the plebeian stains, the obedient smile and habitual cringe of approbation are always welcome. A courtier abuses courts with a better grace: for one who has held a place to rail at placemen and pensioners shews candour and a disregard to self. There is nothing low, vulgar, or disreputable in it!—I doubt whether this *martinet* discipline and spruceness of demeanour is favourable to the *popular* side. The Tories are not so squeamish in their choice of tools. If a writer comes up to a certain standard of dulness, impudence, and want of principle, nothing more is expected. There is fat M——, lean J——, black C——, flimsy H——, lame G——, and one-eyed M——: do they not form an impenetrable phalanx round the throne, and worthy of it! Who ever thought of inquiring into the talents, qualifications, birth, or breeding of a Government-scribbler? If the workman is fitted to the work, they

[1] Mr. Pitt and Mr. Windham were not so nice. They were intimate enough with such a fellow as Cobbett, while he chose to stand by them.

care not one straw what you or I say about him. This shews a confidence in themselves, and is the way to assure others. The Whigs, who do not feel their ground so well, make up for their want of strength by a proportionable want of spirit. Their cause is ticklish, and they support it by the least hazardous means. Any violent or desperate measures on their part might recoil upon themselves.

> 'When they censure the age,
> They are cautious and sage,
> Lest the courtiers offended should be.'

Whilst they are pelted with the most scurrilous epithets and unsparing abuse, they insist on language the most classical and polished in return; and if any unfortunate devil lets an expression or allusion escape that stings, or jars the tone of good company, he is given up without remorse to the tender mercies of his foes for this infraction of good manners and breach of treaty. The envy or cowardice of these half-faced friends of liberty regularly sacrifices its warmest defenders to the hatred of its enemies—mock-patriotism and effeminate self-love ratifying the lists of proscription made out by servility and intolerance. This is base, and contrary to all the rules of political warfare. What! if the Tories give a man a bad name, must the Whigs hang him? If a writer annoys the first, must he alarm the last? Or when they find he has irritated his and their opponents beyond all forgiveness and endurance, instead of concluding from the abuse heaped upon him that he has 'done the State some service,' must they set him aside as an improper person merely for the odium which he has incurred by his efforts in the common cause, which, had they been of no effect, would have left him still fit for their purposes of negative success and harmless opposition? Their ambition seems to be to exist by sufferance; to be safe in a sort of conventional insignificance; and in their dread of exciting the notice or hostility of the lords of the earth, they are like the man in the storm who silenced the appeal of his companion to the Gods—'Call not so loud, or they will hear us!' One would think that in all ordinary cases honesty to feel for a losing cause, capacity to understand it, and courage to defend it, would be sufficient introduction and recommendation to fight the battles of a party, and serve at least in the ranks. But this of Whig Opposition is, it seems, a peculiar case. There is more in it than meets the eye. The *corps* may one day be summoned to pass muster before Majesty, and in that case it will be expected that they should be of *crack* materials, without a stain and without a flaw. Nothing can be too elegant, too immaculate and refined for their imaginary return to office. They are in a

pitiable dilemma — having to reconcile the hopeless reversion of court-favour with the most distant and delicate attempts at popularity. They are strangely puzzled in the choice and management of their associates. Some of them must undergo a thorough ventilation and perfuming, like poor Morgan, before Captain Whiffle would suffer him to come into his presence. Neither can any thing base and plebeian be supposed to 'come betwixt the wind and their nobility.' As their designs are doubtful, their friends must not be suspected: as their principles are popular, their pretensions must be proportionably aristocratic. The reputation of Whiggism, like that of women, is a delicate thing, and will bear neither to be blown upon or handled. It has an ill odour, which requires the aid of fashionable essences and court-powders to carry it off. It labours under the frown of the Sovereign: and swoons at the shout and pressure of the People. Even in its present forlorn and abject state, it relapses into convulsions if any low fellow offers to lend it a helping hand: those who would have their overtures of service accepted must be bedizened and sparkling all over with titles, wealth, place, connections, fashion (in lieu of zeal and talent), as a set-off to the imputation of low designs and radical origin; for there is nothing that the patrons of the People dread so much as being identified with them, and of all things the patriotic party abhor (even in their dreams) a *misalliance* with the rabble!

Why must I mention the instances, in order to make the foregoing statement intelligible or credible? I would not, but that I and others have suffered by the weakness here pointed out; and I think the cause must ultimately suffer by it, unless some antidote be applied by reason or ridicule. Let one example serve for all. At the time that Lord Byron thought proper to join with Mr. Leigh Hunt and Mr. Shelley in the publication called the LIBERAL, Blackwood's Magazine overflowed, as might be expected, with tenfold gall and bitterness; the John Bull was outrageous; and Mr. Jerdan black in the face at this unheard-of and disgraceful union. But who would have supposed that Mr. Thomas Moore and Mr. Hobhouse, those staunch friends and partisans of the people, should also be thrown into almost hysterical agonies of well-bred horror at the coalition between their noble and ignoble acquaintance, between the Patrician and 'the Newspaper-Man?' Mr. Moore darted backwards and forwards from Cold-Bath-Fields' Prison to the Examiner-Officer, from Mr. Longman's to Mr. Murray's shop, in a state of ridiculous trepidation, to see what was to be done to prevent this degradation of the aristocracy of letters, this indecent encroachment of plebeian pretensions, this undue extension of patronage and compromise of privilege. The

Tories were shocked that Lord Byron should grace the popular side by his direct countenance and assistance—the Whigs were shocked that he should share his confidence and counsels with any one who did not unite the double recommendations of birth and genius—but themselves! Mr. Moore had lived so long among the Great that he fancied himself one of them, and regarded the indignity as done to himself. Mr. Hobhouse had lately been black-balled by the Clubs, and must feel particularly sore and tenacious on the score of public opinion. Mr. Shelley's father, however, was an older Baronet than Mr. Hobhouse's—Mr. Leigh Hunt was 'to the full as genteel a man' as Mr. Moore in birth, appearance, and education—the pursuits of all four were the same, the Muse, the public favour, and the public good! Mr. Moore was himself invited to assist in the undertaking, but he professed an utter aversion to, and warned Lord Byron against having any concern with, *joint-publications*, as of a very neutralizing and levelling description. He might speak from experience. He had tried his hand in that Ulysses' bow of critics and politicians, the Edinburgh Review, though his secret had never transpired. Mr. Hobhouse too had written Illustrations of Childe Harold (a sort of partnership concern)—yet to quash the publication of the LIBERAL, he seriously proposed that his Noble Friend should write once a week *in his own name* in the Examiner—the Liberal scheme, he was afraid, might succeed: the Newspaper one, he knew, could not. I have been whispered that the Member for Westminster (for whom I once gave an ineffectual vote) has also conceived some distaste for me—I do not know why, except that I was at one time named as the writer of the famous *Trecenti Juravimus* Letter to Mr. Canning, which appeared in the Examiner and was afterwards suppressed. He might feel the disgrace of such a supposition: I confess I did not feel the honour. The cabal, the bustle, the significant hints, the confidential rumours were at the height when, after Mr. Shelley's death, I was invited to take part in this obnoxious publication (obnoxious alike to friend and foe)—and when the *Essay on the Spirit of Monarchy* appeared, (which must indeed have operated like a bomb-shell thrown into the *coteries* that Mr. Moore frequented, as well as those that he had left,) this gentleman wrote off to Lord Byron, to say that 'there was a taint in the Liberal, and that he should lose no time in getting out of it.' And this from Mr. Moore to Lord Byron—the last of whom had just involved the publication, against which he was cautioned as having a taint in it, in a prosecution for libel by his *Vision of Judgment*, and the first of whom had scarcely written any thing all his life that had not a taint in it. It is true, the Holland-House party might be somewhat staggered by a *jeu-d'esprit*

that set their Blackstone and De Lolme theories at defiance, and that they could as little write as answer. But it was not that. Mr. Moore also complained that 'I had spoken against Lalla Rookh,' though he had just before sent me his 'Fudge Family.' Still it was not that. But at the time he sent me that very delightful and spirited publication, my little bark was seen 'hulling on the flood' in a kind of dubious twilight, and it was not known whether I might not prove a vessel of gallant trim. Mr. Blackwood had not then directed his Grub-street battery against me: but as soon as this was the case, Mr. Moore was willing to 'whistle me down the wind, and let me prey at fortune;' not that I 'proved haggard,' but the contrary. It is sheer cowardice and want of heart. The sole object of the set is not to stem the tide of prejudice and falsehood, but to get out of the way themselves. The instant another is assailed (however unjustly), instead of standing manfully by him, they *cut* the connection as fast as possible, and sanction by their silence and reserve the accusations they ought to repel. *Sauve qui peut*—every one has enough to do to look after his own reputation or safety without rescuing a friend or propping up a falling cause. It is only by keeping in the back-ground on such occasions (like Gil Blas when his friend Ambrose Lamela was led by in triumph to the *auto-da-fe*) that they can escape the like honours and a summary punishment. A shower of mud, a flight of nick-names (glancing a little out of their original direction) might obscure the last glimpse of Royal favour, or stop the last gasp of popularity. Nor could they answer it to their Noble friends and more elegant pursuits to be seen in such company, or to have their names coupled with similar outrages. Their sleek, glossy, aspiring pretensions should not be exposed to vulgar contamination, or to be trodden under foot of a swinish multitude. Their birth-day suits (unused) should not be dragged through the kennel, nor their 'tricksy' laurel-wreaths stuck in the pillory. This would make them equally unfit to be taken into the palaces of princes or the carriages of peers. If excluded from both, what would become of them? The only way, therefore, to avoid being implicated in the abuse poured upon others is to pretend that it is just—the way not to be made the object of the *hue and cry* raised against a friend is to aid it by underhand whispers. It is pleasant neither to participate in disgrace nor to have honours divided. The more Lord Byron confined his intimacy and friendship to a few persons of middling rank, but of extraordinary merit, the more it must redound to his and their credit—the lines of Pope,

> 'To view with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts which caused himself to rise,'—

might still find a copy in the breast of more than one scribbler of politics and fashion. Mr. Moore might not think without a pang of the author of Rimini sitting at his ease with the author of Childe Harold; Mr. Hobhouse might be averse to see my dogged prose bound up in the same volume with his Lordship's splendid verse, and assuredly it would not facilitate his admission to the Clubs, that his friend Lord Byron had taken the Editor of the Examiner by the hand, and that their common friend Mr. Moore had taken no active steps to prevent it!

Those who have the least character to spare, can the least afford to part with their good word to others: a losing cause is always most divided against itself. If the Whigs are fastidious, the Reformers are sour. If the first are frightened at the least breath of scandal, the last are disgusted with the smallest approach to popularity. The one desert you, if all men do not speak well of you: the other never forgive your having shaken off the *incognito* which they assume so successfully, or your having escaped from the Grub into the Butterfly state. The one require that you should enjoy the public favour in its newest gloss: with the other set, the smallest elegance of pretension or accomplishment is fatal. The Whigs never stomached the account of the 'Characters of Shakespear's Plays' in the Quarterly: the Reformers never forgave me for writing them at all, or for being suspected of an inclination to the *belles-lettres*. 'The Gods,' they feared, 'had made me poetical'; and poetry with them is 'not a true thing.' To please the one, you must be a *dandy*: not to incur the censure of the other, you must turn cynic. The one are on the alert to know what the world think or say of you: the others make it a condition that you shall fly in the face of all the world, to think and say exactly as they do. The first thing the Westminster Review did was to attack the Edinburgh. The fault of the one is too great a deference for established and prevailing opinions: that of the other is a natural antipathy to every thing with which any one else sympathises. They do not trim, but they are rivetted to their own sullen and violent prejudices. They think to attract by repulsion, to force others to yield to their opinion by never giving up an inch of ground, and to cram the truth down the throats of their starveling readers, as you cram turkeys with gravel and saw-dust. They would gain proselytes by proscribing all those who do not take their Shiboleth, and advance a cause by shutting out all that can adorn or strengthen it. They would exercise a monstrous ostracism on every ornament of style or blandishment of sentiment; and unless they can allure by barrenness and deformity, and convince you *against the grain*, think they have done nothing. They abjure Sir Walter's novels and

Mr. Moore's poetry as light and frivolous: who but they! Nothing satisfies or gives them pleasure that does not give others pain: they scorn to win you by flattery and fair words; they set up their grim, bare idols, and expect you to fall down and worship them; and truth is with them a Sphinx, that in embracing pierces you to the heart. All this they think is the effect of philosophy; but it is temper, and a bad, sour, cold, malignant temper into the bargain. If the Whigs are too effeminate and susceptible of extraneous impressions, these underlings are too hard and tenacious of their own.[1] They are certainly the least amiable people in the world. Nor are they likely to reform others by their self-willed dogmatism and ungracious manner. If they had this object at heart, they would correct both (for true humanity and wisdom are the same), but they would rather lose the cause of human kind than not shock and offend while they would be thought only anxious to convince, as Mr. Place lost Mr. Hobhouse his first election by a string of radical resolutions, which so far gained their end.—One is hard-bested in times like these, and between such opposite factions, when almost every one seems to pull his own way, and to make his principles a stalking-horse to some private end; when you offend some without conciliating others; when you incur most blame, where you expected most favour; when a universal outcry is raised against you on one side, which is answered by as dead a silence on the other; when none but those who have the worst designs appear to know their own meaning or to be held together by any mutual tie, and when the only assurance you can obtain that your intentions have been upright, or in any degree carried into effect, is that you are the object of *their* unremitting obloquy and ill-will. If you look for any other testimony to it, you will look in vain. The Tories know their enemies: the People do not know their friends. The frown and the lightning glance of power is upon you, and points out the path of honour and of duty: but you can hope to receive no note of encouragement or approbation from the painted booths of Whig Aristocracy, or the sordid styes of Reform!

[1] One of them tried the other day to persuade people to give up the Classics and learn Chinese, because he has a place in the India House. To those who are connected with the tea-trade, this may be of immediate practical interest, but not therefore to all the world. These prosaical visionaries are a species by themselves. It is a matter of fact, that the natives of the South Sea Islands speak a language of their own, and if we were to go there, it might be of more use to us than Greek and Latin—but *not till then*!



AN ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN ACTION

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

SOME REMARKS ON THE SYSTEMS OF HARTLEY AND HELVETIUS



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Published anonymously in 1805 in one vol. 8vo, 324 pp., with the following title-page: 'An Essay on the Principles of Human Action: Being an Argument in favour of the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind. To which are added, Some Remarks on the Systems of Hartley and Helvetius. London: Printed for J. Johnson, No. 72 St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1805.' The volume was 'printed by T. Hamilton, New-street, Fetter-lane.' The last page contained a list of *errata*. These have been corrected in the present edition, which is a reprint verbatim of the first. A second edition was published in 1838 by the author's son, in one vol. 8vo, 324 pp., the title-page of which runs as follows:—'Essays on the Principles of Human Action: on the Systems of Hartley and Helvetius; and on Abstract Ideas. By the late William Hazlitt. *Edited by his Son.* "A work full of original remarks, and worthy a diligent perusal." *Brougham's England and the English.* London: John Miller, 432 Oxford Street.' The volume was printed by Walter Spurr, 215 Oxford Street. The Editor states in an Advertisement that the new edition has been 'considerably improved' from marginal corrections in the author's copy. The essay on Abstract Ideas, which had never before been published, will be included in a later volume of the present edition.

AN ARGUMENT

IN DEFENCE OF THE

NATURAL DISINTERESTEDNESS OF THE HUMAN MIND

It is the design of the following Essay to shew that the human mind is naturally disinterested, or that it is naturally interested in the welfare of others in the same way, and from the same direct motives, by which we are impelled to the pursuit of our own interest.

The objects in which the mind is interested may be either past or present, or future. These last alone can be the objects of rational or voluntary pursuit; for neither the past, nor present can be altered for the better, or worse by any efforts of the will. It is only from the interest excited in him by future objects that man becomes a moral agent, or is denominated selfish, or the contrary, according to the manner in which he is affected by what relates to his own *future* interest, or that of others. I propose then to shew that the mind is naturally interested in it's own welfare in a peculiar mechanical manner, only as far as relates to it's past, or present impressions. I have an interest in my own actual feelings or impressions by means of consciousness, and in my past feelings by means of memory, which I cannot have in the past, or present feelings of others, because these faculties can only be exerted upon those things which immediately and properly affect myself. As an affair of sensation, or memory, I can feel no interest in any thing but what relates to myself in the strictest sense. But this distinction does not apply to future objects, or to those impressions, which determine my voluntary actions. I have not the same sort of exclusive, or mechanical self-interest in my future being or welfare, because I have no distinct faculty giving me a direct present interest in my future sensations, and none at all in those of others. The imagination, by means of which alone I can anticipate future objects, or be interested in them, must carry me out of myself into the feelings of others by one and the same process by

which I am thrown forward as it were into my future being, and interested in it. I could not love myself, if I were not capable of loving others. Self-love, used in this sense, is in it's fundamental principle the same with disinterested benevolence.

Those who have maintained the doctrine of the natural selfishness of the human mind have always taken it for granted as a self-evident principle that *a man must love himself*, or that it is not less absurd to ask why a man should be interested in his own personal welfare, than it would be to ask why a man in a state of actual enjoyment, or suffering likes what gives him pleasure, and dislikes what gives him pain. They say, that no such necessity, nor any positive reason whatever can be conceived to exist for my promoting the welfare of another, since I cannot possibly feel the pleasures, or pains which another feels without first becoming that other, that our interests must be as necessarily distinct as we ourselves are, that the good which I do to another, in itself and for it's own sake can be nothing to me. *Good* is a term relative only to the being who enjoys it. The good which he does not feel must be matter of perfect indifference to him. How can I be required to make a painful exertion, or sacrifice a present convenience to serve another, if I am to be nothing the better for it? I waste my powers out of myself without sharing in the effects which they produce. Whereas when I sacrifice my present ease or convenience, for the sake of a greater good to myself at a future period, the same being who suffers afterwards enjoys, both the loss and the gain are mine, I am upon the whole a gainer in real enjoyment, and am therefore justified to myself: I act with a view to an end in which I have a real, substantial interest. The human soul, continue some of these writers, naturally thirsts after happiness; it either enjoys, or seeks to enjoy. It constantly reaches forward towards the possession of happiness, it strives to draw it to itself, and to be absorbed in it. But as the mind cannot enjoy any good but what it possesses within itself, neither can it seek to produce any good but what it can enjoy: it is just as idle to suppose that the love of happiness or good should prompt any being to give up his own interest for the sake of another, as it would be to attempt to allay violent thirst by giving water to another to drink.

Now I can conceive that a man must be necessarily interested in his own actual feelings, whatever these may be, merely because he *feels* them. He cannot help receiving pain from what gives him pain, or pleasure from what gives him pleasure. But I cannot conceive how he can have the same necessary, absolute interest in whatever relates to himself, or in his own pleasures and pains, generally speaking, whether he feels them, or not. This kind of reasoning,

which in itself is all along founded on a mere play of words, could not have gained the assent of thinking men but for the force with which the idea of self habitually clings to the mind of every man, binding it as with a spell, deadening it's discriminating powers, and spreading the confused associations which belong only to past and present impressions over the whole of our imaginary existence. It therefore becomes difficult to separate ideas which have been thus knit together by custom, or 'by a long tract of time, by the use of language, and want of reflection.' If it were possible for a man's particular successive interests to be all bound up in one general feeling of self-interest as they are all comprehended under the same word, *self*, or if a man on the rack really felt no more than he must have done from the apprehension of the same punishment a year before, there would be some foundation for this reasoning, which supposes the mind to have the same absolute interest in it's own feelings both past, present, and to come. I say the sophism here employed consists in comparing the motives by which we are interested in the welfare of others with the mechanical impulses of self-love, as if because we are mechanically affected by the actual impression of objects on our senses in a manner in which we cannot be affected by the feelings of others, all our feelings with respect to ourselves must be of the same kind, and we could feel no interest in any thing but what was excited in the same way. It is plain we are not interested in our general, remote welfare in the same manner, or by the same necessity that we are affected by the actual sense of pleasure, or pain. We have no instinctive secret sympathy with our future sensations by which we are attracted either consciously or unconsciously to our greatest good; we are for the most part indifferent to it, ignorant of it. We certainly do not know, and we very often care as little what is to happen to ourselves in future: it has no more effect upon us in any way, than if it were never to happen. Were it not for this shortsightedness, and insensibility, where would be the use, or what would become of the rules of personal prudence?

It will be said, I know, that this is foreign to the purpose; for that whether he feels it, or not, every man *has* a real interest in his own welfare which he cannot have in that of another person. First, this is to shift the ground of the argument; for it requires to be made out how a man can be said to have an interest in what he does not feel. There is not evidently the same contradiction in supposing him not to be particularly interested in feelings which he has not, as there is in supposing him not to be interested in his actual, sensible pleasures and pains. Secondly, I shall very readily grant that *to have* and *to feel* an interest in any thing are not always convertible terms, that

is, an interest may attach or belong to an individual in some way or other though he does not feel it at the time. My having a *real* interest in any object may refer to the matter of fact that such an object will some time or other exist: now the reality of it's existence does not certainly depend on my feeling an interest in it previously. Neither is the reality of another's pleasures, or pains affected by my not feeling such an interest in them as I ought to do. The feelings of others are evidently as real, or as much matters of fact in themselves as my own feelings can ever be. This distinction between that which is true and what has merely an imaginary existence, or none at all, does not therefore so far apply to the question, if by a real interest be meant that which relates to a real object, for it is supposed at first that this object does not excite any immediate or real interest in the mind. Another difference that may be insisted on is this, that I *shall have* a real sensible interest in my own future feelings which I cannot possibly have in those of others. I must therefore at the same individual have the same necessary interest in them at present. This may either proceed on the supposition of the absolute, metaphysical identity of my individual being, so that whatever can be affirmed of that principle at any time must be strictly and logically true of it at all times, which is a wild and absurd notion; or it may refer to some other less strict connection between my present and future self, in consequence of which I am considered as the same being, the different events and impressions of my life constituting one regular succession of conscious feelings. In this sense, the saying that *I have* a general interest in whatever concerns my future welfare in fact amounts to no more than affirming, that *I shall have* an interest in that welfare, or that I am nominally and in certain other respects the same being who will hereafter have a real interest in it. The reason why we are so ready to attribute a real identity of interests to the same person is, that we have an indistinct idea of extended consciousness, and a community of feelings as essential to the same thinking being; so that whatever interests me at one time must interest me, or be capable of interesting me, at other times. Now this continued consciousness only serves to connect my past with my present impressions. It only acts retrospectively. I have not previously the same sympathy with my future being that I have with my past being, nor consequently the same natural or necessary interest in my future welfare that I have in my past. Lastly, it may be said, that there is something in the very *idea* of pleasure or pain as affecting myself which naturally excites a lively, unavoidable interest in my mind. I cannot conceive how the mere idea of self can produce any such effect as is here described, unless we imagine that self-love literally consists in the love of self, or

in a proper attachment to our own persons instead of referring to the feelings of desire and aversion, hope, and fear, &c. excited in us by those things which either do, or may immediately affect ourselves. In consequence of the impression of many such objects on the thinking being, we shall come no doubt to connect a sense of self-interest with this very being, with the motions of our blood, and with life itself, and shall by degrees transfer the emotions of interest excited by particular positive feelings to the idea of our own interest generally speaking. This however must be the work of time, the gradual result of habit, and reflection, and cannot be the natural reason why a man pursues his own welfare, or is interested in his own feelings. I think therefore that in the first instance the idea of personal pleasure or pain can only affect the mind as a distinct idea of that which is in itself the object of desire, or aversion, and that the idea of self is nothing more than the first and most distinct idea we have of a being capable of receiving pleasure and pain. It will be the business of the greatest part of the following essay to make out these several points more distinctly.

There is another hypothesis which I shall just mention, that holds a sort of middle place between the two opposite ones already stated. The partisans of this more liberal philosophy, who could not suppress the consciousness of humane and benevolent dispositions in themselves, or the proofs of them in others, but yet knew not how to reconcile these feelings with the supposed selfishness of human nature, have endeavoured to account for the different impulses of generous affection from habit, or the constant connection between the pleasures and pains of others, and our own, by which means we come at last to confound our own interests with theirs, and to feel the same anxiety for their welfare without any view to our own advantage. A man according to this hypothesis becomes attached to others as he becomes attached to any other indifferent object, to a tree, or a stone, from familiarity, and the frequent association of his immediate gratification with the indifferent idea; and this attachment once formed, he must afterwards be interested in their welfare whether he will or no. An example of this may be given in boys at school. A boy is confined to his task at the same time with his school-fellows; he feels the effects of the good, or ill humour of the master in common with the rest; when the school-hour is over, they are all let loose to play together; he will in general like the same games that others do, and be most delighted when they are noisiest, when they happen to be in the best humour, in the hottest part of the game, on the finest days, or in the pleasantest places: they will have the same joyous breakings-up for the holidays, and will often on some bright morning stroll out

in search of unknown good, still return home tired and disappointed together. Would it not be strange if the common fellowship of joys and sorrows did not produce in him some sensibility to the good or ill fortune of his companions, and some real good-will towards them? The greatest part of our pleasures depend upon habit: and so those which arise from acts of kindness and disinterested attachment to others are the most common, the most lasting, the least mixed with evil of all others, to a man devoid of all attachment to others, whose heart was thoroughly hard and insensible to every thing but his own interest would scarcely be able to support his existence, (for to him the spring and active principle of life would be gone:) it follows that we ought to cultivate sentiments of generosity and kindness for others out of mere selfishness. The obligations to the practice of virtue really depend on it's contributing to the original object of our nature, our own proper happiness: for no man is bound to sacrifice his own ultimate welfare to any foreign consideration whatever. The advantages of virtue are however to be derived, like those of any liberal art, from the immediate gratification attending it, from it's necessary effect on the mind, and not from a gross calculation of self-interest. This effect must be the greatest, where there is the most love of virtue for it's own sake, as we become truly disinterested, and generous. Therefore as the habit of generous concern for others, and readiness to promote their welfare cannot be broken in upon at will in every particular instance where our immediate interest might require it, it becomes necessary to disregard all such particular, accidental advantages for the sake of the general obligation, and thus confirm habit into principle.

Whatever may be the manner in which we first acquire disinterested feelings, I do not think that much good can be done by tracing these feelings back again to a selfish origin, and leaving virtue no other basis to rest upon than a principle of refined self-interest, by setting us fast a sort of game at hide-and-seek between the *reason* and *motive* to virtue. Without stopping to inquire whether the effect of this theory upon the mind would be to produce much true generosity, or disinterested simplicity of character, there can be no doubt but that this end must be attained much more effectually, so far as the philosophical theory, or a belief of certain abstract distinctions will ever influence our habitual principles of action,[1] by shewing to man that

[1] The question whether abstract or merely intellectual ideas have ever much influence on the conduct has not been fairly stated. The point is not whether an abstract proposition (no matter whether true or false) of which I become convinced yesterday, will be able to overturn all my previous habits, and prejudices, but whether ideas of this kind may not be made the foundation of systematic prejudices

his nature is originally and essentially disinterested; that as a voluntary agent, he must be a disinterested one; that he could neither desire, nor will, nor pursue his own happiness but for the possession of faculties which necessarily give him an interest out of himself in the happiness of others; that personal identity neither does, nor can imply any positive communication between a man's future, and present self, that it does not give him a mechanical interest in his future being, that man when he *acts* is always absolutely independent of, uninfluenced by the feelings of the being *for whom he acts*, whether this be himself, or another; lastly, that all morality, all rational, and voluntary action, every thing undertaken with a distinct reference to ourselves or others must relate to the future, that is, must have those things for it's object which can only act upon the mind by means of the imagination, and must naturally affect it in the same manner, whether they are thought of in connection with our own future being, or that of others.

I have thought upon this subject so long, and it has sunk into my mind I may say so deeply in the single abstract form which appears to me to explain almost every other view which can be taken of it,

themselves and the strongest principles of action. The ideas concerning religion are of a sufficiently abstract nature: and yet it will not be disputed that early impressions of this kind have some influence on a man's future conduct in life. Two persons accidentally meeting together, and who had never seen one another before shall conceive a more violent antipathy to each other in consequence of a dispute on religion or politics than they might have done from having been personally at variance half their lives. It is objected that this proceeds from wounded vanity. But why is our vanity more easily irritated upon these subjects than upon any other but from the importance attached to them by the understanding? Questions of morality do not always excite the same violent animosity; and this I think is because they do not so properly admit of dispute in themselves, also because they are not so often made the instruments of cabal, and power, and therefore depend less on opinion, or the number of votes, and because every one appealing to his own breast for the truth of his opinion attributes the continuance of the contest not to any want of force in his own arguments, but to a want of proper feelings in his opponent.—I will add here a remark in some measure connected with the last-mentioned observation, that the reason why men are generally more anxious about the opinion entertained of their understanding than their honesty is not so much that they really think this last of less consequence as that a man always believes himself to be the best judge of what passes in his own breast. He therefore thinks very little the better of himself for the good opinion of others. Indeed he considers their suffrages in this respect as a sort of impertinence at best, as implying some doubt upon the subject: and as to their direct censures, he will always find some feelings, or motives in his own mind, or some circumstances with which they are not acquainted, which will in his opinion make a total difference in the case. With respect to manners, and those moral qualities which are denominated *pleasing*, these again depend on the judgment of others; and we find the same jealousy of the opinions of others manifested with respect to these as with respect to our sense, wit, &c.

that I cannot without difficulty bring myself to consider it separately or in detail; and I am sure that many things will appear to others very imperfectly and obscurely expressed which appear to me evident truisms from having been accustomed to refer a number of particular observations, and subordinate trains of feeling, which I have forgotten, to that general form of reasoning. However I hope that the simplicity of the principle itself which must be either logically and absolutely true, or not at all will make it sufficiently intelligible if it be stated with tolerable accuracy.

All voluntary action, that is all action proceeding from a will, or effort of the mind to produce a certain event must relate to the future, or to those things, the existence of which is problematical, undetermined, and therefore capable of being affected by the means made use of with a view to their production, or the contrary. But that which is future, which does not yet exist can excite no interest in itself, nor act upon the mind in any way but by means of the imagination. The direct primary motive, or impulse which determines the mind to the volition of any thing must therefore in all cases depend on the idea of that thing as conceived of by the imagination, and on the idea solely. For the thing itself is a non-entity. By the very act of it's being *willed*, it is supposed not to exist. It neither is any thing, nor can be the cause of any thing. We are never interested in the things themselves which are the real, ultimate, practical objects of volition: the feelings of desire, aversion, &c. connected with voluntary action are always excited by the ideas of those things before they exist. The true impulse to voluntary action can only exist in the mind of a being capable of foreseeing the consequences of things, of being interested in them from the imaginary impression thus made upon his mind, and of making choice of the means necessary to produce, or prevent what he desires or dreads. This distinction must be absolute and universally applicable, if it is so at all. The motives by which I am impelled to the pursuit of my own welfare can no more be the result of a direct impression of the thing which is the object of desire, or aversion, of any positive communication between my present, and future feelings, or of a sort of hypostatical union between the interests of the being acting, and the being acted upon, than the motives by which I am interested in the welfare of others can be so. It is true I have a real, positive interest in my actual feelings which I have not in those of others. But actual pleasure, and pain are not the objects of voluntary action. It can be to no purpose, it is downright nonsense to will that which actually exists, which is impressed on my senses to exist, or not to exist, since it will exist neither more nor less for my willing it, or not willing it. Our shrinking from that

which gives us pain could not in any respect be considered as an act of volition, or reason, if we did not know that the same object which gives us pain will continue to give us pain while we remain in contact with it. The mere mechanical movement which generally accompanies much pain does not appear to me to have any thing more to do with self-love properly so called than the convulsive motions or distortions of the muscles caused by bodily disease.—In other words the object of volition is never the cause of volition. The motive, or internal impression impelling me to the pursuit of any object is by the supposition incompatible with any such interest as belongs to the actual enjoyment of any good, or to the idea of *possession*. The real object of any particular volition is always a mere physical consequence of that volition, since it is willed for that very reason that otherwise it would not exist at all, and since the effect which the mind desires to produce by any voluntary action must be subsequent to that action. It cannot therefore exert any power over my present volitions, and actions, unless we suppose it to act before it exists, which is absurd. For there is no faculty in the mind by which future impressions can excite in it a presentiment of themselves in the same way that past impressions act upon it by means of memory. When we say that future objects act upon the mind by means of the imagination, it is not meant that such objects exercise a real power over the imagination, but merely that it is by means of this faculty that we can foresee the probable or necessary consequences of things, and are interested in them.

I hardly know how to insist on a point so plain in itself that it cannot be made plainer by any kind of reasoning. I only wish to define the sense of the general position as strictly as I can, and to guard if possible against any mistake arising from ambiguity of expression. For nothing but the certainty of absolute proof, and of having avoided every error of this sort can overcome the reluctance of the mind to admit fully and in all it's consequences a distinction, which however simple in the abstract goes to the direct subversion of one of the most deeply-rooted feelings of the human mind, namely that of the essential difference between the interest we have in promoting our own welfare by all the means in our power, and that which we take in promoting the welfare of others. Almost every one has a feeling that he has a real interest in the one, but that his interest in the other is merely imaginary; that his interest in the one is absolute and independent of himself, that it exists with the same force whether he feels it, or not, whether he pursues, or neglects it, that it is a part of himself, a bond from which he cannot free himself without changing his being, whereas the interest which he takes in the welfare of others is a voluntary interest, taken up and dismissed

at pleasure, and which exists no longer than he feels it; that his interest in his own welfare, however distant, must affect *him* equally at present, since he is really the same being who is to enjoy, or suffer hereafter, but that with respect to the feelings of pleasure, or pain which another is to enjoy or suffer, he neither has any direct present interest, nor can have an indirect future interest in them: they are nothing to him. This is the common feeling; and it is perhaps not less common to the most generous than to the most narrow and selfish minds: for a man of a generous disposition will take pleasure in sacrificing his own immediate interest considering it as a real sacrifice, and will be fond of exulting in his superiority to the gross influence of selfish motives. If however the distinction above insisted on with respect to voluntary action be any thing more than a play of words without meaning, the whole of this feeling must be utterly false, and groundless. For the mind can take, it can have no interest in any thing, that is an object of practical pursuit, but what is strictly imaginary: it is absurd to suppose that it can have a *real* interest in any such object directly whether relating to ourselves, or others (this has been I trust sufficiently shewn already): neither can the reality of my future interest in any object give me a real interest in that object at present, unless it could be shewn that in consequence of my being the same individual I have a necessary sympathy with my future sensations of pleasure or pain, by which means they produce in me the same mechanical impulses as if their objects were really present. The puncture of a pin causing an irritation in the extremity of one of the nerves is sensibly felt along the whole extent of that nerve; a violent pain in any of the limbs disorders the whole frame; I feel at the same moment the impressions made on opposite parts of my body; the same conscious principle pervades every part of me, it is in my hands, my feet, my eyes, my ears at the same time, or at any rate is immediately affected by whatever is impressed on all these, it is not confined to this, or that organ for a certain time, it has an equal interest in the whole sentient system, nothing that passes in any part of it can be indifferent to me. Here we have a distinct idea of a real individuality of person, and a consequent identity of interests. Till some such diffusive conscious principle can be shewn to exist, producing a real connection between my future sensations and present impulses, collecting, and uniting the different successive moments of my being in one general representative feeling of self-interest as the impressions made on different parts of my body are all conveyed to one common principle of thought, it is in vain to tell me that I have the same interest in my future sensations as if they were present, because I am the same individual. However nearly allied, however

similar I may be to my future self, whatever other relation I may bear to that self, so long as there is not this intercommunity of thoughts and feelings, so long as there is an absolute separation, an insurmountable barrier fixed between the present, and the future, so that I neither am, nor can possibly be affected at present by what I am to feel hereafter, I am not to any moral or practical purpose the *same* being. Natural impossibilities cannot be made to give way to a mere courtesy of expression. 'But I know that I shall become that being.' Then my interest in it is founded on that knowledge, and not on an event which not only is not felt by my mind, but is itself yet to come, viz. the transition of my present into my future being. How does it signify to me what I shall hereafter feel, or how can it influence my present conduct, or how ought it to do so but because, and in as far as, I have some idea of it beforehand?[1] The injury that I may do to my future interest will not certainly by any kind of reaction return to punish me for my neglect of my own happiness. In this sense, I am always free from the consequences of my actions. —The interests of the being who acts, and of the being who suffers are never one. They are not swayed by the influence of the same causes either directly, or by mechanical sympathy. The good which is the object of pursuit can never coexist with the motives which make it an object of pursuit. The good which any being pursues is always at a distance from him. His wishes, his exertions are always excited by 'an airy, notional good,' by the idea of good, not the reality. But for this there could be no desire, no pursuit of any thing. We cannot strive to obtain what we already possess: we cannot give to that which already exists a double reality. My real interest is not therefore something which I can handle, which is to be felt, or seen, it is not lodged in the organs of hearing, or taste, or smell, it is not the subject of any of the senses, it is not in any respect what is commonly understood by a real, substantial interest. On the contrary, it is fundamentally, and in it's origin and by it's very nature the creature of reflection, and imagination; and whatever can be made the subject of these, whether relating to ourselves or others, may also be the object of an interest powerful enough to become the motive of volition and action. If it should be asked then what difference it can make to me whether I pursue my own welfare, or entirely neglect it,

[1] The distinction between the motives to action and the *reasons* for it cannot affect the argument here insisted on. When it is said, that though I am not really governed by such and such motives, I ought to be governed by them, this must mean (or it means nothing) that such would be the effect of a proper exertion of my faculties. The obligation to act in this or that manner must therefore be deduced from the nature of those faculties, and the *possibility* of their being impressed in a certain manner by certain objects.

what reason I can have to be at all interested in it, I answer that according to the selfish hypothesis I do not see any. But if we admit that there is something in the very idea of good, or evil, which naturally excites desire or aversion, which is in itself the proper motive of action, which impels the mind to pursue the one and to avoid the other by a true moral necessity, then it cannot be indifferent to me whether I believe that any being will be made happy or miserable in consequence of my actions, whether this be myself or another. I naturally desire and pursue my own good (in whatever this consists) simply from my having an idea of it sufficiently warm and vivid to excite in me an emotion of interest, or passion; and I love and pursue the good of others, of a relative, of a friend, of a family, a community, or of mankind for just the same reason.

The scheme of which I have here endeavoured to trace the general outline differs from the common method of accounting for the origin of our affections in this, that it supposes what is personal or selfish in our affections to be the growth of time and habit, and the principle of a disinterested love of good as such, or for it's own sake without any regard to personal distinctions to be the foundation of all the rest. In this sense self-love is in it's origin a perfectly disinterested, or if I may so say *impersonal* feeling. The reason why a child first distinctly wills or pursues his own good is not because it is *his*, but because it is *good*. For the same reason he prefers his own gratification to that of others not because he likes himself better than others, but because he has a more distinct idea of his own wants and pleasure than of theirs. Independently of habit and association, the strength of the affection excited is in proportion to the strength of the idea, and does not at all depend on the person to whom it relates except indirectly and by implication. A child is insensible to the good of others not from any want of goodwill towards them, or an exclusive attachment to self, but for want of knowing better. Indeed he can neither be attached to his own interest nor that of others but in consequence of knowing in what it consists. It is not on that account the less natural for him to seek to obtain personal pleasure, or to avoid personal pain after he has felt what these are. We are not born benevolent, that is we are not born with a desire of we know not what, and good wishes for we know not whom: neither in this sense are we born with a principle of self-love, for the idea of self is also acquired. When I say therefore that the human mind is naturally benevolent, this does not refer to any innate abstract idea of good in general, or to an instinctive desire of general indefinite unknown good but to the natural connection between the idea of happiness and the desire of it, independently of any particular attachment to the person who is to feel it.

There is a great difference between the general love of good which implies a knowledge of it, and a general disposition to the love of good, which does not imply any such thing. It is necessary to keep this distinction in our minds, or the greatest confusion will ensue. It is the general property of iron to be attracted by the loadstone, though this effect can only take place in consequence of the loadstone's being brought near enough to it, nor is any thing more meant by the assertion. The actual desire of good is not inherent in the mind of man, because it requires to be brought out by certain accessory objects or ideas, but the disposition itself, or property of the mind which makes him liable to be so affected by certain objects is inherent in him and a part of his nature, as sensibility to pleasure and pain will not be denied to be natural to man, though the actual feelings of pleasure and pain can only be excited in him by the impression of certain external objects. The love of my own particular good must precede that of the particular good of others, because I am acquainted with it first: the love of particular must precede that of general good whether my own, or another's, or the general good of mankind for the same reason. I do not therefore originally love my own particular positive good as a portion of general good, or with a distinct reference in my mind to the good of the whole; for I have as yet no idea of nor any concern about the whole. But I love my own particular good as consisting in the first conception I have of some one desirable object for the same reason, for which I afterwards love any other known good whether my own, or another's, whether conceived of as consisting in one or more things, that is because it possesses that essential property common to all good, without which it would cease to be good at all, and which has a general tendency to excite certain given affections in my mind. I conceive that the knowledge of many different sorts of good must lead to the love or desire of all these, and that this knowledge of various good must be accompanied with an intermediate, composite, or indefinite idea of good, itself the object of desire, because retaining the same general nature: now this is an abstract idea. This idea will no doubt admit of endless degrees of indefiniteness according to the number of things, from which it is taken, or to which it is applied, and will be refined at last into a mere word, or logical definition. In this case it will owe all it's power as a motive to action to habit, or association; for it is so immediately or in itself no longer than while it implies a sentiment, or real feeling representative of good, and only in proportion to the degree of force and depth which this feeling has.[1]

[1] Similarity has been defined to be *partial* sameness. Curve lines have a general resemblance, or analogy to one another as such. Does this resemblance then

The same objection evidently applies to the supposition either of an original principle of general comprehensive benevolence, or of general and comprehensive self-love. They both suppose the mind to have attained an indefinite power of abstraction which is not it's natural state. Both the one and the other must be made up of many actual pleasures and pains, of many forgotten feelings and half-recollections, of hopes and fears and insensible desires: the one, that is, a sentiment of general benevolence can only arise from an habitual cultivation of the natural disposition of the mind to sympathise with the feelings of others by constantly taking an interest in those which we know, and imagining others that we do not know, as the other feeling of abstract self-interest, that is in the degree in which it generally subsists, must be caused by a long narrowing of the mind to our own particular

consist in their being partially the same? This may be said where the difference arises from drawing out the same sort of curve to a greater extent because by adding to the shorter curve I can make it equal to the other. But I cannot by adding any other line to an oval convert it into a circle, because these two sorts of curves can never coincide even in their smallest conceivable parts. It should seem then that their similarity is not to be deduced from partial sameness, or their having some one thing exactly the same, common to them both. But they have the same general nature as curves. True: but in what does this abstract identity consist? Is it not the same with similarity? So that we return to the same point from which we set out. I confess no light appears to me to be thrown on the subject by saying that it is partial identity. The same sort of reasoning is applicable to the question whether all good is not to be resolved into one simple *principle*, or essence, or whether all that is really good or pleasurable in any sensation is not the same identical feeling, an infusion of the same leven of good, and that all the rest is perfectly foreign to the nature of good and is merely the form or vehicle in which it is conveyed to the mind. I cannot however persuade myself that our sensations differ only as to more, or less; or that the pleasure *derived* from seeing a fine picture, or hearing a fine piece of music, that the gratification *derived* from doing a good action and that which accompanies the swallowing of an oyster are in reality not at bottom the same pleasure. The liquor tastes of the vessel through which it passes. It seems most reasonable to suppose that our feelings differ in their nature according to the nature of the objects by which they are excited, though not necessarily in the same proportion, as objects may excite very distinct ideas which have little or nothing to do with feeling. Why should there be only *two* sorts of feeling, pleasure and pain? I am convinced that any one who has reflected much on his own feelings must have found it impossible to refer them all to the same fixed invariable standard of good or evil, or by throwing away the mere husk and refuse without losing any thing essential to the feeling to arrive at some one simple principle, the same in all cases, and which determines by it's quantity alone the precise degree of good or evil in any sensation. Some sensations are like others; this is all we know of the matter, and all that is necessary to form a class, or genus. The contrary method of reasoning appears to proceed on a supposition that things differing at all in kind must differ *in toto*, must be quite different from each other; so that a resemblance in kind must imply an absolute coincidence in part, or in as far as the things resemble one another.—See Upham on the Human Mind.

feelings and interests, and a voluntary insensibility to every thing which does not immediately concern ourselves. It is this excessive attachment to our own good because it is ours, or for the sake of the abstract idea, which has no immediate connection with a real imagination of our own pleasures and pains, that I consider as a purely artificial feeling and as proper selfishness; not that love of self which first or last is derived from a more immediate knowledge of our own good and is a natural consequence of the general love of good as such. So of our attachment to others; for the general principle as exerted with respect to others admits of the same modifications from habit as when it has a merely selfish direction. Our affections settle upon others as they do upon ourselves: they pass from the thing to the person. 'I hate to fill a book with things that all the world knows;' or I might here give a very elaborate and exact account taken from twenty different authors of the manner in which this transition takes place. I do not see how ideas are the better for being often repeated. Suffice it to say that in all these cases of habitual attachment the motives to action do not depend so much on a real interest in the thing which is the object of pursuit as on a general disposition to serve that particular person occasioned by a previous habit of kind offices and by transferring the feeling of a real interest in a number of things conducive to that person's welfare to the abstract idea of his good in general. I leave it with the reader to apply this to the cases of friendship, family attachments, the effects of neighbourhood, &c. and to consider the feuds, the partialities, the antipathies produced by these attachments, and the consequent unwillingness to attend to the natural feelings of compassion, humanity, and the love of justice: and then let him see if the same process, that is the ingrafting a general, or abstract interest on an habitual positive feeling will not account in the same way for the effects of self-love, without supposing this last as an exclusive principle to be natural to the human mind. For my own part, I believe that the cases are exactly parallel. Thus we may consider self-love as bearing the same relation to family affection as this does to the more general love of our neighbour, as the love of our neighbour does to that of our country, or as the love of our country does to that of mankind. The love of mankind is here to be taken for an already given, definite, and to a certain degree *associated* feeling. The comparison might be instituted with a slight shade of difference between self-love, the love of a relative or friend, of a neighbour, and of an entire stranger. It is in proportioning our anxiety to promote the welfare of any of these to our sense of the use our assistance may be of, to use a well-known phrase, *without respect of persons*, that what may be called the *natural* balance of our

affections seems to consist. By the bye, this supposes that our insensibility to the feelings of others does not arise from an unwillingness to sympathize with them, or a habit of being stupidly engrossed by our own interests. Whether there may not be some higher principle of our general nature in conformity to which our sentiments and actions with respect to others should be voluntarily regulated, according to the same rule by which gross animal appetite is subjected to rational self-interest, may be made the subject of a future inquiry. All that is necessary to my present purpose is to have made it appear that the principles of natural self-love and natural benevolence, of refined self-love and refined benevolence are the same; that if we admit the one, we must admit the other; and that whatever other principles may be combined with them, they must stand, or fall together.

It is not therefore my intention to puzzle myself or my readers with the intricacies of a debtor and creditor account between nature and habit. Whatever the force of habit may be, however subtle and universal it's influence, it is not every thing, not even the principal thing. Before we plant, it is proper to know the nature of the soil, first that we may know whether it is good for any thing, secondly that we may know what it is good for. On these two questions will depend the sort of cultivation we bestow upon it. After this is settled, it is idle to dispute how much of the produce is owing to cultivation, and how much to the nature of the soil. We should only be sure of having made the best use of it we can. But we cannot be sure of this till we know what it is naturally capable of. I will however lay down two general maxims on this subject which will not admit of much controversy. First, when there is no natural connection between any two things which yet have been supposed inseparable from a confused association of ideas, it is possible to destroy this illusion of the imagination by rational distinction, and consequently to weaken the force of the habitual feeling which is confirmed and rendered permanent by the conviction of the understanding. Thus, a principle of general self-interest has been supposed inseparable from individuality, because a feeling of immediate consciousness does essentially belong to certain individual impressions, and this feeling of consciousness, of intimate sympathy, or of absolute self-interest has been transferred by custom and fancy together to the abstract idea of self. It is therefore of some use to separate these ideas, or to shew that there is no foundation in reason or the nature of things for a very strong prejudice which has been conceived to arise immediately out of them. The mind must be drawn together, must be contracted and shrunk up within itself by the mere supposition

of this perpetual unity with itself and intense concentration of self-interest. Secondly, where this natural connection is wanting, that is, where the habitual connection of certain feelings with certain ideas does not arise from a predisposition in the mind to be affected by certain objects more than others, but from the particular direction which has been given to the mind or a more frequent association between those feelings and ideas, a contrary habit may be produced by giving the mind a different direction, and bestowing a greater share of attention on other objects. It cannot be a matter of indifference then whether the faculty by which I am originally interested in the welfare of others is the same as that by which I am interested in my own welfare, or whether I am naturally incapable of feeling the least interest in the welfare of others except from it's indirect connection with my own. Habit is by it's nature to a certain degree arbitrary, and variable, the original disposition of the mind, it's tendency to acquire or persevere in this or that habit is alone fixed and invariable.[1] As however the force of previous habit is and always must be on the side of selfish feelings, it is some consolation to think that the force of the habit we may oppose to this is seconded by reason, and the natural disposition of the mind, and that we are not obliged at last to establish generosity and virtue 'lean pensioners' on self-interest.[2]

I have thus far attempted to shew by a logical deduction that the human mind is naturally disinterested: I shall at present try to shew the same thing somewhat differently, and more in detail.

[1] It is a gross mistake to consider all habit as necessarily depending on association of ideas. We might as well consider the strength which is given to a muscle by habitual exertion as a case of the association of ideas. The strength, delicacy, &c. given to any feeling by frequent exercise is owing to habit. When any two feelings, or ideas are often repeated in connection, and the properties belonging to the one are by this means habitually transferred to the other, this is association.

[2] 'Ainsi se forment les premiers liens qui l'unissent' [le jeune homme] 'à son espèce. En dirigeant sur elle sa sensibilité naissante ne craignez pas qu'elle embrassera d'abord tous les hommes, & que ce mot de *genre-humain* signifiera pour lui quelque chose. Non, cette sensibilité se bornera premièrement à ses semblables, & ses semblables ne seront point pour lui des inconnus, mais ceux avec lesquels il a des liaisons, ceux que l'habitude lui a rendus chers, ou nécessaires, ceux qu'il voit évidemment avoir avec lui des manières de penser & de sentir communes, ceux qu'il voit exposés aux peines qu'il a souffertes, & sensibles aux plaisirs qu'il a goutés; ceux, en un mot, en qui l'identité de nature plus manifestée lui donne une plus grande disposition à aimer. Ce ne sera qu'après avoir cultivé son naturel en milles manières, après bien des réflections sur ses propres sentimens, & sur ceux qu'il observera dans les autres, qu'il pourra parvenir à généraliser ses notions individuelles sous l'idée abstraite d'humanité & joindre à ses affections particulières celles qui peuvent l'identifier avec son espèce.' Emile, t. 2, p. 192.—It is needless to add any thing on this passage. It speaks for itself.

'L'amour du genre-humain n'est autre chose en nous que l'amour de la justice.' Ibid. p. 248.

To suppose that the mind is originally determined in it's choice of good and rejection of evil solely by a regard to self is to suppose a state of *indifference* to both, which would make the existence of such a feeling as self-interest utterly impossible. If there were not something in the very notion of good, or evil which naturally made the one an object of immediate desire and the other of aversion, it is not easy to conceive how the mind should ever come to feel an interest in the prospect of obtaining the one or avoiding the other. It is great folly to think of deducing our desire of happiness and fear of pain from a principle of self-love, instead of deducing self-love itself from our natural desire of happiness and fear of pain. This sort of attachment to self could signify nothing more than a foolish complacency in our own idea, an idle dotage, and idolatry of our own abstract being; it must leave the mind indifferent to every thing else, and could not have any connection with the motives to action, unless some one should chuse to make it the foundation of a new theory of the love of life and fear of death. So long as the individual exists, and remains entire, this principle is satisfied. As to the manner in which it exists, by what objects it shall be affected, whether it shall prefer one mode of being to another, all this is left undetermined. If then by self-love be meant a desire of one mode of being and aversion to another, or a desire of our own well-being, what is it that is to constitute this well-being? It is plain there must be something in the nature of the objects themselves which of itself determines the mind to consider them as desirable or the contrary previously to any reference of them to ourselves. They are not converted into good and evil by being impressed on our minds, but they affect our minds in a certain manner because they are essentially good or evil. How shall we reconcile this with supposing that the nature of those objects or their effect on the mind is entirely changed by their being referred to this or that person? I repeat it that self-interest implies certain objects and feelings for the mind to be interested in: to suppose that it can exist separately from all such objects, or that our attachment to certain objects is solely deduced from, and regulated by our attachment to self is plain, palpable nonsense.

Take the example of a child that has been burnt by the fire, and consequently conceives a dread of it. This dread we will say does not consist simply in the apprehension of the pain itself abstractedly considered, but together with this apprehension of pain he connects the idea (though not a very distinct one) of himself as about to feel it. Let us consider in what way the intervention of this idea can be supposed to cause or increase his dread of the pain itself. In the first place then it is evident that the fire actually burns the child, not

because he is thinking of himself, or of it's burning him, but because it is the nature of fire to burn and of the child's hand to feel pain, and his dislike of the pain while it actually exists is the immediate, necessary and physical consequence of the *sense* of pain, surely not an indirect and reflex result of the child's love to himself, or after-consideration that pain is an evil as it affects himself. Again I apprehend that after the actual pain has ceased, it continues to be thought of and is afterwards recollected as pain, or in other words, the feeling or sense of pain leaves a correspondent impression in the memory which adheres to the recollection of the object, and makes the child involuntarily shrink from it by the same sort of necessity, that is from the nature of the human mind and the recollected impression, and not from his referring it historically to his own past existence. In like manner I conceive that this idea of pain when combined by the imagination with other circumstances and transferred to the child's future being will still retain its original tendency to give pain, and that the recurrence of the same painful sensation is necessarily regarded with terror and aversion by the child, not from it's being conceived of in connection with his own idea, but because it is conceived of as pain.[1] It should also be remembered as the constant principle of all our reasonings, that the impression which the child has of himself as the subject of future pain is never any thing more than an idea of imagination, and that he cannot possibly by any kind of anticipation feel that pain as a real sensation a single moment before it exists. How then are we to account for his supposed exclusive attachment to this ideal self so as to make that the real source of the dislike and dread which the apprehension of any particular pain to be inflicted on himself causes in the mind? There are two ways in which this may at first sight appear to be satisfactorily made out. The first is from the notion of personal identity: this has been considered already and will be again considered by and by. The other is something as follows. The child having been burned by the fire and only knowing what the pain of a burn is from his recollecting to have felt it himself, as soon as he finds himself in danger of it again, has a very vivid recollection of the pain it formerly gave him excited in his mind; and by a kind of sudden transposition substituting this idea in the place of his immediate apprehension, in thinking of the

[1] This account is loose enough. I shall endeavour to give a better, as to the manner in which ideas may be supposed to be connected with volition, at the end of this essay. In the mean time I wish the reader to be apprized, that I do not use the word *imagination* as contradistinguished from or opposed to reason, or the faculty by which we reflect upon and compare our ideas, but as opposed to sensation, or memory. It has been shewn above that by the word *idea* is not meant a merely abstract idea.

danger to which he is exposed he confounds the pain he is to feel with that which he has already actually felt, and in reality shrinks from the latter. I mean that the child strongly recollects that particular sort of pain as it has affected himself, and as it is not possible for him to have a recollection of it's effect on any one else, he only regards it as an evil in future in connection with the same idea, or as affecting himself, and is entirely indifferent to it as it is supposed to affect any one else. Or in other words he remembers being burnt himself as an actual sensation, and he does not remember the actual sensations of any one but himself: therefore being able to trace back his present feelings to his past impressions, and struck with the extreme faintness of the one compared with the other, he gives way to his immediate apprehensions and imaginary fears only as he is conscious of, and dreads, the possibility of their returning into the same state of actual sensation again.

I do not deny that some such illusion of the imagination as I have here attempted to describe begins to take place very soon in the mind, and continues to acquire strength ever after from various causes. What I would contend for (and this is all that my argument requires) is that it is and can be nothing more than an illusion of the imagination, strengthening a difference in subordinate, indirect, collateral circumstances into an essential difference of kind. The objection would indeed hold good if it were true that the child's imaginary sympathy with the danger of mother must be derived as it were in a kind of direct line from that other's actual sense of past pain, or its immediate communication to his own senses, which is absurd. It is not supposed that the child can ever have felt the actual pains of another as his own actual pains, or that his sympathy with others is a real continuation and result of this original organic sympathy in the same way that his dread of personal pain is to be deduced from his previous consciousness of it. His sympathy with others is necessarily the result of his own past experience: if he had never felt any thing himself, he could not possibly feel for others. I do not know that any light would be thrown upon the argument by entering into a particular analysis of the faculty of imagination; nor shall I pretend to determine at what time this faculty acquires sufficient strength to enable the child to take a distinct interest in the feelings of others. I shall content myself with observing that this faculty is necessary to the child's having any apprehension or concern about his own future interest, or that of others; that but for this faculty of multiplying, varying, extending, combining, and comparing his original passive impressions he must be utterly blind to the future and indifferent to it, insensible to every thing beyond the present moment, altogether

incapable of hope, or fear, or exertion of any kind, unable to avoid or remove the most painful impressions, or to wish for or even think of their removal, to withdraw his hand out of the fire, or to move his lips to quench the most burning thirst; that without this faculty of conceiving of things which have not been impressed on his senses and of inferring like things from like, he must remain totally destitute of foresight, of self-motion, or a sense of self-interest, the passive instrument of undreaded pain and unsought-for pleasure, suffering and enjoying without resistance and without desire just as long as the different outward objects continued to act upon his senses, in a state of more than ideot imbecility; and that with this faculty enabling him to throw himself forward into the future, to anticipate unreal events and to be affected by his own imaginary interest, he must necessarily be capable in a greater or less degree of entering into the feelings and interests of others and of being consequently influenced by them. The child (by the time that his perceptions and actions begin to take any thing of a consistent form so that they can be made the subject of reasoning) being supposed to know from experience what the pain of a burn is, and seeing himself in danger a second time is immediately filled with terror, and strives either by suddenly drawing back his hand, catching hold of something, or by his cries for assistance to avoid the danger to which he is exposed. Here then his memory and senses present him with nothing more than certain external objects in themselves indifferent, and the recollection of extreme pain formerly connected with the same or similar objects. If he had no other faculties than these, he must stop here. He would see and feel his own body moved rapidly towards the fire, but his apprehensions would not outrun it's actual motion: he would not think of his nearer approach to the fire as a consequence of the force with which he was carried along, nor dream of falling into the fire till he found it actually burning him. Even if it were possible for him to foresee the consequence, it would not be an object of dread to him; because without a reasoning imagination he would not and could not connect with the painted flame before him the idea of violent pain which the same kind of object had formerly given him by it's actual contact. But in fact he *imagines* his continued approach to the fire till he falls into it; by his imagination he attributes to the fire a power to burn, he conceives of an ideal self endued with a power to feel, and by the force of imagination solely anticipates a repetition of the same sense of pain which he before felt. If then he considers this pain which is but an ideal sensation impressed on an ideal being as an object of real, present, necessary, and irresistible interest to him, and knowing that it cannot be avoided but by an

immediate exertion of voluntary power, makes a sudden and eager effort to avoid it by the first means he can think of, why are we to suppose that the apprehension of the same pain to be inflicted on another whom he must believe to be endued with the same feelings, and with whose feelings he must be capable of sympathizing in the same manner as with his own imaginary feelings, should not affect him with the same sort of interest, the same sort of terrour, and impel him to the same exertions for his relief?[1]

Because, it is said, in his own case there is a natural deception, by which he confounds his future being with his past being, and the idea of a future imaginary pain with the recollection of a past conscious pain. At any rate, this must be unconsciously: if the sense of present danger acts so powerfully on his mind as to bring back the recollection of a past sensation, and set that before him in the place of the real object of his fear, so that, while he is endeavouring to avoid an immediate danger, he is in fact thinking only of past suffering without his perceiving this confusion of ideas, surely the same thing must take place in a less degree with respect to others. If it be thought necessary for him, before he can seek his own future interest, to confound it with his past interest by the violent transition of an immediate apprehension into the stronger recollection of an actual impression, then I say that by the same sort of substitution he will identify his own interest with that of others, whenever a like obvious danger recalls forcibly to his mind his former situation and feelings, the lenses of memory being applied in the one case to excite his sympathy and in the other to excite personal fear, the objects of both being in themselves equally imaginary and according to this hypothesis both perfectly indifferent. But I should contend that the assumption here made that the direct and proper influence of the imagination is insufficient to account for the effects of personal fear, or of no force at all in itself is without any foundation. For there is no reason to be shewn why the ideas of the imagination should not be efficient, operative, as well as those of memory, of which they are essentially compounded. Their substance is the

[1] I take it for granted that the only way to establish the selfish hypothesis is by shewing that our own interest is in reality brought home to the mind as a motive to action by some means or other by which that of others cannot possibly affect it. This is unavoidable, unless we ascribe a particular genius of selfishness to each individual which never suffers his affections to wander from himself for a moment; or shall we suppose that a man's attachment to himself is because he has a long nose or a short one, because his hair is black or red, or from an unaccountable fancy for his own name, for all these make a part of the individual, and must be deemed very weighty reasons by those who think it self-evident that a man must love himself because he is himself?

same. They are of one flesh and blood. The same vital spirit animates them both. To suppose that the imagination does not exert a direct influence over human actions is to reject the plain inference from the most undoubted facts without any motive for so doing from the nature and reason of things. This notion could not have gained ground as an article of philosophical faith but from a perverse restriction of the use of the word *idea* to abstract ideas, or external forms, as if the essential quality in the feelings of pleasure, or pain, must entirely evaporate in passing through the imagination; and, again, from associating the word *imagination* with merely fictitious situations and events, that is, such as never will have a real existence, and as it is supposed never will, and which consequently do not admit of action.[1] Besides, though it is certain that the imagination is strengthened in its operation by the indirect assistance of our other faculties, yet as it is this faculty which must be the immediate spring and guide of action, unless we attribute to it an inherent, independent power over the will, so as to make it bend to every change of circumstances or probability of advantage, and a power at the same time of controuling the blind impulses of associated mechanical feelings, and of making them subservient to the accomplishment of some particular purpose, in other words without a power of willing a given *end* for itself, and of employing the means immediately necessary to the production of that end, because they are perceived to be so, there could be neither volition, nor action, neither rational fear nor steady pursuit of any object, neither wisdom nor folly, generosity or selfishness: all would be left to the accidental concurrence of some mechanical impulse with the immediate desire to obtain some very simple object, for in no other case can either accident or habit be supposed likely to carry any rational purpose into effect. To return however to what I have said above in answer to this objection, it is evident that all persons are more inclined to compassionate those pains and calamities in others by which they have been affected themselves, which proves that the operation of that principle, even supposing it to be the true one, is not confined to selfish objects. Our sympathy is always directly excited in proportion to our knowledge of the pain, and of the disposition and feelings of the sufferer. Thus with respect to ourselves we are little affected by the apprehension of physical pain which we have never felt and therefore can know little of; and we have still less sympathy with others in this case. Our incredulity and insensibility with respect to what others frequently suffer from the toothache and other incidental disorders must have been remarked by

[1] See the last note but one.

every one, and are even ludicrous from the excess to which they are carried. Give what account you will of it, the effect is the same;—our self-love and sympathy depend upon the same causes, and constantly bear a determinate proportion to each other, at least in the same individual. The same knowledge of any pain, which increases our dread of it, makes us more ready to feel for others who are exposed to it. When a boy I had my arm put out of joint, and I feel a kind of nervous twitching in it to this day whenever I see any one with his arm bound up in consequence of a similar accident. This part of my subject has been so well detailed by Smith and others that it is needless to insist on it farther. There are certain disorders which have a disgusting appearance, that shock and force attention by their novelty; but they do not properly excite our sympathy, or compassion, as they would do if we had ever been subject to them ourselves. Children seem to sympathize more naturally with the outward signs of passion in others without inquiring into the particular causes by which it is excited, whether it is that their ideas of pain are more gross and simple, therefore more uniform and more easily substituted for each other, or that grown-up persons, having a greater number of ideas and being oftener able to sympathize with others from knowing what they feel, habitually make this knowledge the foundation of their sympathy.[1]

[1] The general clue to that ænigma, the character of the French, seems to be that their feelings are very imperfectly modified by the objects exciting them. That is, the difference between the several degrees and kinds of feeling in them does not correspond as much as it does in most other people with the different degrees and kinds of power in the external objects. They want neither feeling nor ideas in the abstract; but there seems to be no connection in their minds between the one and the other. Consequently their feelings want compass and variety, and whatever else must depend on the 'building up of our feelings through the imagination.' The feelings of a Frenchman seem to be all one feeling. The moment any thing produces a change in him, he is thrown completely out of his character, he is quite beside himself. This is perhaps in a great measure owing to their quickness of perception. They do not give the object time to be *thoroughly* impressed on their minds, their feelings are roused at the first notice of its approach, and if I may so express myself, fairly run away from the object. Their feelings do not grapple with the object. The least stimulus is sufficient to excite them and more is superfluous, for they do not wait for the impression, or stop to inquire what degree or kind it is of. There is not resistance sufficient in the matter to receive those sharp incisions, those deep, marked, and strongly rooted impressions, the traces of which remain for ever. From whatever cause it proceeds, the sensitive principle in them does not seem to be susceptible of the same modification and variety of action as it does in others; and certainly the outward forms of things do not adhere to, do not wind themselves round their feelings in the same manner. For any thing that appears to the contrary, objects might be supposed to have no direct communication with the internal sense of pleasure or pain, but to act upon it through some intermediate, very confined organ, capable of

In general it seems that those physical evils, which we have actually experienced, and which from their nature must produce nearly the same effect upon every one, must excite a more immediate and natural

transmitting little more than the simple impulse. But the same thing will follow, if we suppose the principle itself to be this very organ, that is, to want comprehensiveness, elasticity, and plastic force. (It is difficult to express this in English: but there is a French word, *ressort*, which expresses it exactly. This is possibly owing to their feeling the want of it; as there is no word in any other language to answer to the English word, *comfort*, I suppose, because the English are the most uncomfortable of all people). It will rather follow from what has been here said than be inconsistent with it that the French must be more sensible of minute impressions and slight shades of difference in their feelings than others, because having, as is here supposed, less real variety, a narrower range of feeling, they will attend more to the differences contained within that narrow circle, and so produce an artificial variety. In short their feelings are very easily set in motion and by slight causes, but they do not go the whole length of the impression, nor are they capable of combining a great variety of complicated actions to correspond with the distinct characters and complex forms of things. Hence they have no such thing as poetry. This however must not be misunderstood. I mean then that I never met with any thing in French that produces the same kind of feeling in the mind as the following passage. If there is any thing that belongs even to the same class with it, I am ready to give the point up.

Antony. *Eros*, thou yet behold'st me.
Eros. Ay, noble Lord.
Ant. Sometimes we see a cloud that 's Dragonish,
A vapour sometimes like a Bear, or Lion,
A tower'd Citadel, a pendant Rock,
A forked Mountain, or blue Promontory
With Trees upon 't, that nod unto the World
And mock our Eyes with Air. Thou hast seen these Signs,
They are black Vesper's Pageants.
Eros. Ay, my Lord.
Ant. That which is now a Horse, even with a Thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As Water is in Water.
Eros. It does, my Lord.
Ant. My good Knave, *Eros*, now thy Captain is
Even such a body, &c.

It is remarkable that the French, who are a lively people and fond of shew and striking images, should be able to read and hear with such delight their own dramatic pieces, which abound in nothing but general maxims, and vague declamation, never embodying any thing, and which would appear quite tedious to an English audience, who are generally considered as a dry, dull, plodding people, much more likely to be satisfied with formal descriptions and grave reflections. This appears to me to come to the same thing that I have said before, namely, that it is characteristic of the French that their feelings let go their hold of things almost as soon as the impression is made. Except sensible impressions therefore (which have on that account more force, and carry them away without opposition while they last) all their feelings are general; and being general, not being marked by any strong distinctions, nor built on any deep foundation of

momentary fear of danger was gone by, but that the reason for avoiding it still remained the same, the mind would be easily led to seek for the true cause of action in something more fixed and permanent than the fleeting ideas of remote objects, and to require that every object whether of desire or aversion should have some stronger hold on the individual than it's momentary effect on his imagination before it became an object of serious pursuit, or the contrary. But in rejecting the ideas of things as themselves the ultimate grounds and proper objects of action, and referring the mind to the things themselves as the only solid basis of a rational and durable interest, what do we do but go back to the first direct idea of the object, which as it represents that object is as distinct from any secondary reflection on, or oblique consciousness of, itself as an absolute thing, the object of thought, as a sensation can be different from an idea, or a present impression from a future one. There is nothing in the foregoing theory which has any tendency to overturn the fundamental distinctions between truth and falsehood, or the common methods of judging what these are: all the old boundaries and land-marks remain just where they were. It does not surely by any means follow because the reality of future objects can only be judged of by the mind, that therefore it has no power of distinguishing between the probable consequences of things, and what can never happen, that it is to take every impulse of will or fancy for truth, or because future objects cannot act upon the mind from without, that therefore our ideas cannot have any reference to, or properly represent those objects, or anything external to the mind, but must consist entirely in the conscious contemplation of themselves.

There is another feeling in a great measure the same with the former, but distinguishable from it and still more strongly connected with a sense of self-interest, namely, that of continued personal identity. This has been already treated of: I shall here resume the question once for all, as it is on this that the chief stress of the argument lies. The child seeing himself in danger of the fire does not think of his present and future self as two distinct beings, but as one and the same being: he as it were *projects* himself forward into the future, and identifies himself with his future being. He knows that he shall feel his own future pleasures and pains, and that he must therefore be as much interested in them as if they were present. In thinking of the future, he does not conceive of any change as really taking place in himself, or of any thing intermediate between his present and future being, but considers his future sensations as affecting that very same conscious being in which he now feels such an anxious and unavoidable interest. We say that the hand which

the child snatches back from the fire is the same hand which but for his doing so would the next moment be exposed to the most excessive pain. But this is much more true of that inward conscious principle which alone connects the successive moments of our being together, and of which all our outward organs are but instruments, subject to perpetual changes both of action and suffering. To make the difference of time the foundation of an essential distinction and complete separation between his present and future being as if this were the only thing to be attended to, is to oppose an unmeaning sophism to plain matter of fact, since mere distance of time does *not* destroy individuality of consciousness. He is the same conscious being now that he will be the next moment, or the next hour, or a month or a year hence. His interests as an individual as well as his being must therefore be the same. At least this must be the case as long as he retains the consciousness of his past impressions connecting them together in one uniform or regular train of feeling: for the interruption of this sense of continued identity by sleep, inattention or otherwise seems from it's being afterwards renewed to prove the point more clearly, as it seems to shew that there is some deep inward principle which remains the same in spite of all particular accidental changes.

The child does no doubt consider himself as the same being, or as directly and absolutely interested in his own welfare, as far as he can distinctly foresee the consequences of things to himself. But this very circumstance of his identifying himself with his future being, of feeling for this imaginary self as if it were incorporated with his actual substance, and weighed upon the pulses of his blood, is itself the strongest instance that can be given of the force of the imagination, which the advocates of the selfish hypothesis would represent as a faculty entirely powerless.

No one, I should think, will be disposed seriously to maintain that this future imaginary self is, by a kind of metaphysical transubstantiation, virtually embodied in his present being, so that his future impressions are indirectly communicated to him before-hand. For whatever we may imagine, or believe concerning the substance itself, or elementary principle in which thought is supposed to reside, it is plain that that principle as acted upon by external objects, or modified by particular actual thoughts and feelings (which alone can be the motives of action, or can impel the mind in this, or that direction) is perpetually changing; and it is also plain that the changes which it has to undergo at any time can have no possible effect on those which it has previously undergone, which may be the cause indeed but cannot be the effect of subsequent changes. In this sense the

individual is never the same for two moments together. What is true of him at one time is never [that we know of] exactly and particularly true of him at any other time. It is idle to say that he is the same being, generally speaking; that he has the same general interest. For he is also a man in general; and this argument would prove that he has a general interest in whatever concerns humanity. Indeed the terms mean nothing as applied to this question. The question is whether the individual is the same being in such sort or manner as that he has an equal, absolute interest in every thing relating to himself, or that his future impressions affect him as much and impel him to action with the same mechanical force as if they were actually present. This is so far from being true that his future impressions do not exert the smallest influence over his actions, they do not affect him mechanically in any degree. The catechism of this philosophy would run thus. You are necessarily interested in your future sensations? Yes. And why so? Because I am the same being. What do you mean by *the same being*? The same being is the same individual, that is, one who has the same interests, the same feelings, the same consciousness; so that whatever affects him at any one time must extend to his whole existence. He must therefore be at all times interested in it alike. Do you then feel your future sensations before they really exist? No. How then, if you do not feel them, can you be affected by them? Because as the same individual, &c. That is, by the very supposition, the pain which the child is to suffer does not exist, of course he does not feel it, nor can he be moved, affected or interested by it as if it did: and yet in the same breath, by a shrewd turn of logic it is proved that as he is the same being, he must feel, be interested in and affected by it as much as he ever will. But then it will as shrewdly follow that with this implication he is not the same being, for he cannot be affected in the same manner by an object before it is impressed on his senses that he is afterwards; and the fear or imaginary apprehension of pain is a different thing from the actual perception of it. There is just the same difference between feeling a pain yourself and believing that another will feel it.

I do request the reader to bear it in mind throughout the whole of this reasoning, that when I say that the child *does not* feel, that he *is not* interested in his future sensations, and consider this as equivalent to his *having* no real or personal interest in them, I mean that he *never* feels or can be affected by them before-hand; that he is always necessarily cut off from every kind of communication with them, that they cannot possibly act upon his mind as motives to action, or excite in him any kind of impulse in any circumstances

or any manner: and I conceive that it is no great stretch of speculative refinement to insist that without some such original faculty of being immediately affected by his future sensations more than by those of others, his relation to his future self, whatever that may be, cannot be made the foundation of his having a real positive interest in his future welfare which he has not in that of others. A general, or abstract, or reflex interest in any object, implies either a previous positive interest in that object, or a natural capacity in the mind to be affected by it in the manner given. Thus I may be said to pursue any object from a general interest in it, though it excites no interest or emotion in my mind at the time, when I do this from habit, or when the impression has been so often repeated as to have produced a mechanical tendency to the pursuit of the object, which has no need of any new impulse to excite it. Or the same thing may be said with reference to my general nature as a voluntary agent. This implies that the object, in which I am supposed to be interested without being sensible of it, is in itself *interesting* to me, that it is an object in which I can and must necessarily be interested, the moment it is known to me; that I am interested generally in that whole class of objects, and may be said to be interested in this inclusively. To go farther than this, and say that the mind as the representative of truth is or ought to be interested in things as they are really and truly interesting in themselves, without any reference to the manner in which they immediately affect the individual, is to destroy at once the foundation of every principle of selfishness, which supposes that all objects are good or bad, desirable or the contrary, solely from their connection with self. But I am tired of repeating the same thing so often; for 'as to those that will not be at the pains of a little thought, no multiplication of words will ever suffice to make them understand the truth or rightly conceive my meaning.' [1]

To return. Even if it were possible to establish some such preposterous connection between the same individual, as that, by virtue of this connection, his future sensations should be capable of transmitting their whole strength and efficacy to his present impulses, and of clothing ideal motives with a borrowed reality, yet such is the nature of all sensation, or absolute existence as to be incompatible with voluntary action. How should the reality of my future interest in any object be (by anticipation) the reason of my having a real interest in the pursuit of that object at present, when if it really existed I could no longer pursue it. The feelings of desire, aversion, &c. connected with voluntary action must always be excited by the

[1] Berkeley's Essay on Vision.

idea of the object before it exists, and must be totally inconsistent with any such interest as belongs to actual suffering or enjoyment.[1] The interest belonging to any sensation or real object as such, or which arises as one may say from the final absorption of the idea in the object cannot have any relation to an active or voluntary interest which necessarily implies the disjunction of these two things: it cannot therefore be the original, the parent-stock, the sole and absolute foundation of an interest which is defined by it's connection with voluntary action.—Still it will be said that however difficult it may be to explain in what this consists, there is a principle of some sort or other which constantly connects us with ourselves, and makes each individual the same person distinct from every one else. And certainly if I did not think it possible to account satisfactorily for the origin of the idea of self, and the influence which that idea has on our actions without loosening the foundation of the foregoing reasonings, I should give them up without a question, as there is no reasoning which can be safely opposed against a common feeling of human nature left unexplained, and without shewing in the clearest manner the grounds from which it may have arisen. I shall proceed to state (as far as is necessary to the present argument) in what the true notion of personal identity appears to me to consist; and this I believe it will be easy to shew depends entirely on the continued connection which subsists between a man's past and present feelings and not, *vice versâ*, on any previous connection between his future and his present feelings, which is absurd and impossible.

Every human being is distinguished from every other human being, both numerically, and characteristically. He must be numerically distinct by the supposition: otherwise he would not be another individual, but the same. There is however no contradiction in supposing two individuals to possess the same absolute properties: but then these original properties must be differently modified afterwards from the necessary difference of their situations, or we must suppose them both to occupy the same relative situation in two distinct systems corresponding exactly with each other. In fact every one is found to differ essentially from every one else, if not in original properties, in the circumstances and events of their lives and consequent ideas. In thinking of a number of individuals, I conceive of them all as differing in various ways from one another as well as from myself. They differ in size, in complexion, in features, in the expression of their countenances, in age, in the events and actions of their lives, in situation, in knowledge, in temper, in power. It is this perception or apprehension of their real differences

[1] See page 392, and the following pages.

that first enables me to distinguish the several individuals of the species from each other, and that seems to give rise to the most general idea of individuality, as representing first positive number, and secondly the sum of the differences between one being and another as they really exist in a greater or less degree in nature, or as they would appear to exist to an impartial spectator, or to a perfectly intelligent being. But *I* am not in reality more different from others than any one individual is from any other individual; neither do I in fact suppose myself to differ really from them otherwise than as they differ from each other. What is it then that makes the difference greater *to me*, or that makes me feel a greater difference in passing from my own idea to that of any one else than in passing from the idea of an indifferent person to that of any one else? Neither my existing as a separate being, nor my differing from others is of itself sufficient to constitute personality, or give me the idea of self, since I might perceive others to exist, and compare their actual differences without ever having this idea.

Farther, individuality expresses not merely the absolute difference, or distinction between one individual and another, but also a relation, or comparison of that individual with itself, whereby we affirm that it is in some way or other the same with itself or one thing. In one sense it is true of all existences whatever that they are the same with themselves, that is they are what they are and not something else. Each thing is itself, it is that individual thing and no other, and each combination of things is that combination and no other. So also each individual is necessarily the same with himself, or in other words that combination of ideas which represents any individual person is that combination of ideas and not a different one. This is the only true and absolute identity which can be affirmed of any being; which it is plain does not arise from a comparison of the different parts composing the general idea one with another, but each with itself, or all of them taken together with the whole. I cannot help thinking that some idea of this kind is frequently at the bottom of the perplexity which is felt by most people who are not metaphysicians (not to mention those who are) when they are told that the man is not the same with himself, their notion of identity being that he is the same with himself in as far as he is positively different from every one else. They compare his present existence with the present existence of others, and his continued existence with the continued existence of others. Thus when they say that the man is the same being in general, they do not mean that he is the same at twenty that he is at sixty, but their general idea of him includes both these extremes, and therefore the same

man, that is collective idea, is both the one and the other. This however is but a rude logic. Not well understanding the process of distinguishing the same individual into different metaphysical sections to compare, collate, and set one against the other, (so awkwardly do we at first apply ourselves to the analytic art!) to get rid of the difficulty, the mind produces a *double* individual part real and part imaginary, or repeats the same idea twice over, in which case it is a contradiction to suppose that the one does not correspond exactly with the other in all it's parts. There is no other absolute identity in the case.

All individuals (or all that we name such) are aggregates, and aggregates of dissimilar things. Here then the question is not how we distinguish one individual from another, or a number of things from a number of other things, which distinction is a matter of absolute truth, but how we come to confound a number of things together, and consider many things as the same, which cannot be strictly true. This idea must therefore relate to such a connection between a number of things as determines the mind to consider them as one whole, each thing in that whole having a much nearer and more lasting connection with the rest than with any thing else not included in it, so that the degree of connection between the parts after all requires to be determined by annexing the name of the thing, that is collective idea, signified. (The same causes that determine the mind to consider a number of things as the same individual must of course imply a correspondent distinction between them and other things, not making part of that individual.) The eye is not the same thing as the ear, it is a contradiction to call it so. Yet both are parts of the same body, which contains these and infinite other distinctions. The reason of this is that all the parts of the eye have evidently a distinct nature, a separate use, a greater mutual dependence on one another than on those of the ear, at the same time that the connection between the eye and ear as well as the rest of the body is still very great, compared to their connection with any other body of the same kind, which is none at all. Similarity is in general but a subordinate circumstance in determining this relation. For the eye is certainly more like the same organ in another individual than the different organs of sight and hearing are like one another in the same individual. Yet we do not, in making up the imaginary individual, associate our ideas according to this analogy, which of itself would answer no more purpose than the things themselves would, so separated and so reunited, but we think of them in that order in which they are mechanically connected together in nature, because it is on this order that depends their power of mutually

acting and reacting on each other, of acting conjointly upon other things or of being acted upon by them. To give an instance which just occurs to me. Suppose there are two gold-headed canes standing together in the corner of the room. I of course consider each of them as the same cane. This is not from the similarity of the gold to the wood. But the two gold-heads together would not if taken off at all answer the purpose of a cane, and the two canes together would be more than I should want. Nor is it simply from the contiguity of the parts, (for the canes themselves are supposed to touch one another) but from their being so united that by moving any part of one of them, I of necessity move the whole. The closest connection between my ideas is formed by that relation of things among themselves, which is most necessary to be attended to in making use of them, the common concurrence of many things to some given end: for example, my idea of the walking-stick is defined by the simplicity of the action necessary to wield it for that particular purpose. However, it seems hardly possible to define the different degrees or kinds of identity in the the same thing by any general rule. Thus we say the same tree, the same forest, the same river, the same field, the same country, the same world, the same man, &c. The nature of the thing will best point out the sense in which it is said to be the same.[1] I am not the same thing, but many different things. To insist on absolute simplicity of nature as essential to individuality would be to destroy all individuality: for it would lead to the supposition of as many distinct individuals, as there are thoughts, feelings, actions, and

[1] The sum of the matter is this. Individuality may relate either to absolute unity, to the identity, or similarity of the parts of any thing, or to an extraordinary degree of connection between things neither the same nor similar. This last alone in fact determines the positive use of the word, at least with respect to man, and other organized beings. (Indeed the term is hardly ever applied to other things in common language.) When I speak of the difference between one individual and another, this must refer ultimately to the want of such connection between them, or to my perceiving that a number of things are so connected as to have a mutual and intimate dependence on one another, making one individual, and that they are so *disconnected* with a number of other things as not to have the least habitual dependence upon or influence over them, which makes them two distinct individuals. As to the other distinctions between one individual and another, namely those of number and properties, the first of these subsists as necessarily between the parts of the individual, as between one individual and another, and the second frequently subsists in a much greater degree between those parts, than between different individuals. Two distinct individuals can certainly never be the same: that is, supposing the number of parts in each individual to be as 10, 10 can never make 20. But neither can 10 ever be made into an unit; so that we should have ten individuals instead of one by insisting on the absolute distinction of numbers. When I say therefore that one individual differs from another, I must be understood by implication to mean, in some

properties in the same being. Each thought would be a separate consciousness, each organ a different system. Each thought is a distinct thing in nature; and many of my thoughts must more nearly resemble the thoughts of others than they do my own sensations, for instance, which nevertheless are considered as a part of the same being. As to the continued identity of the whole being, that is the continued resemblance of my thoughts to my previous thoughts, of my sensations to my previous sensations and so on, this does not by any means define or circumscribe the individual, for we may say in the same manner that the species also is going on at the same time, and continues the same that it was. It is necessary to determine what constitutes the same individual at some given moment of time before we can say that he *continues* the same. Neither does the relation of cause and effect determine the point: the father of the child is not the child, nor the child the father. In this case there is an obvious reason to the contrary: but we make the same distinction where a proper succession takes place and the cause is entirely lost in the effect. We should hardly extend the idea of identity to the child before it has life, nor is the fly the same with the caterpillar. Here we again recur to likeness as essential to identity.

But to proceed to a more particular account of the origin of our idea of self, which is this relation of a thinking being to itself. This can only be known in the first instance by a consciousness of what passes in our own minds. I should say then that personality does not arise either from the being this, or that, from the identity of the thinking being with itself at different times or at the same time, or still less from being unlike others, which is not at all necessary to it, but from the peculiar connection which subsists between the different faculties and perceptions of the same conscious being, constituted as man is, so that as the subject of his own reflection or consciousness the same things impressed on any of his faculties produce a quite different effect upon *him* from what they would do if they were impressed in the same way on any other being. Personality seems to be nothing more than conscious individuality: it is the power of perceiving that you are and what you are from the

way in which the parts of that individual do not differ from each other or not by any means in the same degree. The mind is however extremely apt to fasten on the distinctions of number and properties where they co-exist with the other distinction, and almost loses sight of those distinctions between things that have a very close connection with each other. When therefore we include the distinctions of number and properties in our account of the difference between one individual and another, this can only be true in an absolute sense, and not if it be meant to imply that the same distinctions do not exist in the same individual. —This account is altogether very crude and unsatisfactory.

immediate reflection of the mind on it's own operations, sensations, or ideas. It cannot be affected in the same direct manner by the impressions and ideas existing in the minds of others: otherwise they would not be so many distinct minds, but one and the same mind; for in this sense the same mind will be that in which different ideas and faculties have this immediate communication with or power of acting and reacting upon each other. If to this we add the relation of such an inward conscious principle to a certain material substance, with which it has the same peculiar connection and intimate sympathy, this combination will be the same person.

The visible impression of a man's own form does not convey to him the idea of personality any more than that of any one else; because as objects of sight they are both equally obvious and make the same direct impression on the eye; and the internal perception is in both cases equally incommunicable to any other being. It is the impinging of other objects against the different parts of our bodies, or of the body against itself so as to affect the sense of touch, that extends (though perhaps somewhat indirectly) the feeling of personal identity to our external form. The reason of which is that the whole class of tangible impressions, or the feelings of heat and cold, of hard and soft, &c. connected with the application of other material substances to our own bodies can only be produced by our immediate contact with them, that is, the body is necessarily the instrument by which these sensations are conveyed to the mind, for they cannot be conveyed to it by any impression made on the bodies of others; whereas, as an object of sight or where the body in general acts from without on that particular organ, the eye, the impression which it excites in the mind can affect it no otherwise than any similar impression produced by any other body must do. Afterwards no doubt the visible image comes in to confirm and give distinctness to the imperfect conclusions of the other sense.[1]

It is by comparing the knowledge that I have of my own impressions, ideas, feelings, powers, &c. with my knowledge of the same

[1] I remember a story somewhere in the Arabian Nights of a man with a silver thigh. Why may not a fable serve for an illustration as well as any thing else? Metaphysics themselves are but a dry romance. Now suppose this thigh to have been endued with a power of sensation and to have answered every other purpose of a real thigh. What difference would this make in its outward appearance either to the man himself or to any one else? Or how by means of sight would he know it to be *his* thigh, more than it was? It would still look just like what it did, a silver thigh and nothing more. It's impression on the eye would not depend on it's being a *sensible* substance, on it's having life in it, or being connected with the same conscious principle as the eye, but on it's being a visible substance, that is having extension, figure, and colour.

or similar impressions, ideas, &c. in others, and with the still more imperfect conception that I form of what passes in their minds when this is supposed to be essentially different from what passes in my own, that I acquire the general notion of self. If I had no idea of what passes in the minds of others, or if my ideas of their feelings and perceptions were perfect representations, *i.e.* mere conscious repetitions of them, all proper personal distinction would be lost either in pure self-love, or in perfect universal sympathy. In the one case it would be impossible for me to prefer myself to others as I should be the sole object of my own consciousness; and in the other case I must love all others as myself, because I should then be nothing more than part of a whole, of which all others would be equally members with myself. I will here add once more that this distinction subsists as necessarily and completely between myself and those who most nearly resemble me as between myself and those whose character and properties are the very opposite of mine: because it does not relate to the difference between one being and another, or between one object and another considered absolutely or in themselves, but solely to the difference of the manner and the different degrees of force and certainty, with which, from the imperfect and limited nature of our faculties, the same or different things affect us as they act immediately upon ourselves, or are supposed to act upon others. Indeed the distinction becomes marked and intelligible in proportion as the objects or impressions are intrinsically the same, as then it is impossible to mistake the true principle on which it is founded, namely the want of any direct communication between the feelings of one being and those of another. This will shew why the difference between ourselves and others must appear greater to us than that between other individuals, though it is not really so.

Considering mankind in this two-fold relation, as they are to themselves, or as they appear to one another, as the subjects of their own thoughts, or the thoughts of others, we shall find the origin of that wide and absolute distinction which the mind feels in comparing itself with others to be confined to two faculties, viz. *sensation*, or rather consciousness,[1] and *memory*. The operation of both these faculties is of a perfectly exclusive and individual nature; and so far as their operation extends (but no farther) is man a personal, or if you will, a selfish being. The sensation excited in me by a piece of red-hot iron striking against any part of my body is simple, absolute, terminating in itself, not representing any thing beyond itself, nor capable of being represented by any other sensation

[1] To avoid an endless subtlety of distinction I have not here given any account of consciousness in general: but the same reasoning will apply to both.

or communicated to any other being. The same sensation may indeed be excited in another by the same means, but this sensation does not imply any reference to, or consciousness of mine: there is no communication between my nerves, and another's brain, by means of which he can be affected with my sensations as I am myself. The only notice or perception which another can have of this sensation in me or which I can have of a similar sensation in another is by means of the imagination. I can form an imaginary idea of that pain as existing out of myself: but I can only feel it as a sensation when it is actually impressed on myself. Any impression made on another can neither be the cause nor object of sensation to me. The impression or idea left in my mind by this sensation, and afterwards excited either by seeing iron in the same state, or by any other means is properly an idea of memory. This idea necessarily refers to some previous impression in my own mind, and can only exist in consequence of that impression: it cannot be derived from any impression made on another. I do not *remember* the feelings of any one but myself. I may remember the objects which must have caused such or such feelings in others, or the outward signs of passion which accompanied them: these however are but the recollection of my own immediate impressions, of what I saw or heard; and I can only form an idea of the feelings themselves after they have ceased, as I must do at the time by means of the imagination. But though we should take away all power of imagination from the human mind, my own feelings must leave behind them certain traces, or representations of themselves retaining the same properties, and having the same immediate connection with the conscious principle. On the other hand if I wish to anticipate my own future feelings, whatever these may be, I must do so by means of the same faculty, by which I conceive of those of others whether past or future. I have no distinct or separate faculty on which the events and feelings of my future being are impressed beforehand, and which shews as in an inchanted mirror to me and me alone the reversed picture of my future life. It is absurd to suppose that the feelings which I am to have hereafter should excite certain correspondent impressions, or presentiments of themselves before they exist, or act mechanically upon my mind by a secret sympathy. I can only abstract myself from my present being and take an interest in my future being in the same sense and manner, in which I can go out of myself entirely and enter into the minds and feelings of others. In short there neither is nor can be any principle belonging to the individual which antecedently gives him the same sort of connection with his future being that he has

with his past, or that reflects the impressions of his future feelings backwards with the same kind of consciousness that his past feelings are transmitted forwards through the channels of memory. The size of the river as well as it's taste depends on the water that has already fallen into it. It cannot roll back it's course, nor can the stream next the source be affected by the water that falls into it afterwards. Yet we call both the same river. Such is the nature of personal identity.[1] If this account be true (and for my own part the only perplexity that crosses my mind in thinking of it arises from the utter impossibility of conceiving of the contrary supposition) it will follow that those faculties which may be said to constitute self, and the operations of which convey that idea to the mind draw all their materials from the past and present. But all voluntary action must relate solely and exclusively to the future. That is, all those impressions or ideas with which selfish, or more properly speaking, personal feelings must be naturally connected are just those which have nothing at all to do with the motives of action.

If indeed it were possible for the human mind to alter the present or the past, so as either to recal what was done, or, to give it a still greater reality, to make it exist over again and in some more emphatical sense, then man might with some pretence of reason be supposed naturally incapable of being impelled to the pursuit of any *past* or *present* object but from the mechanical excitement of personal motives. It might in this case be pretended that the impulses of imagination and sympathy are of too light, unsubstantial, and remote a nature to influence our real conduct, and that nothing is worthy of the concern of a wise man in which he has not this direct, unavoidable, and homefelt interest. This is however too absurd a supposition to be dwelt on for a moment. I do not *will* that to be which

[1] Suppose a number of men employed to cast a mound into the sea. As far as it has gone, the workmen pass backwards and forwards on it, it stands firm in it's place, and though it recedes further and farther from the shore, it is still joined to it. A man's personal identity and self-interest have just the same principle and extent, and can reach no farther than his actual existence. But if a man of a metaphysical turn, seeing that the pier was not yet finished, but was to be continued to a certain point and in a certain direction, should take it into his head to insist that what was already built and what was to be built were the same pier, that the one must afford as good footing as the other, and should accordingly walk over the pier-head on the solid foundation of his metaphysical hypothesis—he would argue a great deal more ridiculously, but not a whit more absurdly than those who found a principle of absolute self-interest on a man's future identity with his present being. But say you, the comparison does not hold in this, that the man *can* extend his thoughts (and that very wisely too) beyond the present moment, whereas in the other case he cannot move a single step forwards. Grant it. This will only shew that the mind has wings as well as feet, which of itself is a sufficient answer to the selfish hypothesis.

already exists as an object of sense, nor that to have been which has already existed, and is become an object of memory. Neither can I will a thing not to be which actually exists, or that which has really existed not to have been. The only proper objects of voluntary action are (by necessity) future events: these can excite no possible interest in the mind but by means of the imagination; and these make the same direct appeal to that faculty whether they relate to ourselves, or others, as the eye receives with equal directness the impression of our own external form, or that of others.

It will be easy to perceive in this manner how notwithstanding the contradiction involved in the supposition of a general, absolute self-interest, the mind comes to feel a deep and habitual conviction of the truth of this opinion. Feeling in itself a continued consciousness of it's past impressions, it is naturally disposed to transfer the same sort of identity and consciousness to the whole of it's being, as if whatever is said generally to belong to *itself* must be inseparable from it's very existence. As our actual being is constantly passing into our future being, and carries this internal feeling of consciousness along with it, we seem to be already identified with our future being in that permanent part of our nature, and to feel by anticipation the same sort of necessary sympathy with our future selves, that we know we shall have with our past selves. We take the tablets of memory, reverse them, and stamp the image of self on that, which as yet possesses nothing but the name. It is no wonder then that the imagination constantly outstripping the progress of time, when it's course is marked out along the strait unbroken line of individuality, should confound the necessary differences of things, and confer on my future interests a reality, and a connection with my present feelings which they can never have. The interest which is hereafter to be felt by this continued conscious being, this indefinite unit, called *me*, seems necessarily to affect me in every part of my existence. In the first place, we abstract the successive modifications of our being, and particular temporary interests into one simple nature, and general principle of self-interest, and then make use of this nominal abstraction as an artificial medium to compel those particular actual interests into the same close affinity and union with each other, as different lines meeting in the same centre must have a mutual communication with each other.—On the other hand, as I always remain perfectly distinct from others, the interest which I take in their past or present feelings being (like that which I take in their future feelings) never any thing more than the effect of imagination and sympathy, the same illusion and preposterous transposition of ideas cannot take place with regard to them, namely the confounding a physical impulse with the rational

difference in the question whether the active impulse proceeds directly from the desire of positive enjoyment, or a wish to get rid of some positive uneasiness. I should say then that setting aside what is of a purely physical, or [for aught I can tell] instinctive nature in the case, the inference of appetite over our volitions may be accounted for consistently enough with the foregoing hypothesis from the natural effects of a particularly irritable state of bodily feeling, rendering the idea of that which will heighten and gratify it's susceptibility of pleasurable feeling, or remove some painful feeling proportionably vivid, and the object of a more vehement desire than can be excited by the same idea, when the body is supposed to be in a state of indifference, or only ordinary sensibility to that particular kind of gratification. Thus the imaginary desire is sharpened by constantly receiving fresh supplies of pungency from the irritation of bodily feeling, and it's direction is at the same time determined according to the bias of this new impulse, first indirectly by having the attention fixed on our own immediate sensations; secondly, because that particular gratification, the desire of which is increased by the pressure of physical appetite, must be referred primarily and by way of distinction to the same being, by whom the want of it is felt, that is, to myself. As the actual uneasiness which appetite implies can only be excited by the irritable state of my own body, so neither can the desire of the correspondent gratification subsist in that intense degree which properly constitutes appetite, except when it tends to relieve that very same uneasiness by which it was excited. As in the case of hunger. There is in the first place the strong mechanical action of the nervous and muscular systems co-operating with the rational desire of my own relief, and forcing it it's own way. Secondly, this state of uneasiness continues to grow more and more violent, the longer the relief which it requires is withheld from it:— hunger takes no denial, it hearkens to no compromise, is soothed by no flattery, tired out by no delay. It grows more importunate every moment, it's demands become louder the less they are attended to. The first impulse which the general love of personal ease receives from bodily pain will give it the advantage over my disposition to sympathize with others in the same situation with myself; and this difference will be increasing every moment, till the pain is removed. Thus if I at first either through compassion or by an effort of the will am regardless of my own wants, and wholly bent upon satisfying the more pressing wants of my companions, yet this effort will at length become too great, and I shall be incapable of attending to any thing but the violence of my own sensations, or the means of alleviating them. It is plain with respect to one of our appetites,

I mean the sexual, where the gratification of the same passion in another is the means of gratifying our own, that our physical sensibility stimulates our sympathy with the desires of the other sex, and on the other hand this feeling of mutual sympathy increases the physical desires of both. This is indeed the chief foundation of the sexual passion, though I believe that it's immediate and determining cause depends upon other principles not to be here lightly touched on.[1] It would be easy to shew from many things that mere appetite (generally at least in reasonable beings) is but the fragment of a self-moving machine, but a sort of half-organ, a subordinate instrument even in the accomplishment of it's own purposes; that it does little or nothing without the aid of another faculty to inform and direct it. There are several striking examples of this given by Rousseau in relating the progress of his own passions. (See the first volume of his Confessions.) Before the impulses of appetite can be converted into the regular pursuit of a given object, they must first be communicated to the understanding, and modify the will through that. Consequently as the desire of the ultimate gratification of the appetite is not the same with the appetite itself, that is mere physical uneasiness, but an indirect result of its communication to the thinking or imaginative principle, the influence of appetite over the will must depend on the extraordinary degree of force and vividness which it gives to the idea of a particular object; and accordingly we find that the same cause, which irritates the desire of selfish gratification, increases our sensibility to the same desires and gratification in others, where they are consistent with our own, and where the violence of the physical impulse does not overpower every other consideration.

Make the most of the objection,—it can only apply to the determinations of the will while it is subject to the gross influence of another faculty, with which it has neither the same natural direction, nor is it in general at all controuled by it. The question which I have proposed to examine is whether there is any general principle of selfishness in the human mind, or whether it is not naturally disinterested. Now the effects of appetite are so far from being any confirmation of the first supposition, that we are even oftener betrayed by them into actions contrary to our own well-known, clear, and lasting interest than into those which are injurious to others. The 'short-lived pleasure' and the 'lasting woe' fall to the lot of the same being.—I will give one more example and then have done. A man addicted to the pleasures of the bottle is less able to govern this propensity after drinking a certain quantity and feeling the actual

[1] See Preface to Wordsworth's Poems.

pleasure and state of excitement which it produces, than he is to abstain entirely from it's indulgence. When once the liquor *gets into his head*, to use the common phrase, the force which it gives to his predominant feeling gets the better of every other idea, and he from that time loses all power of self-controul. Both before, and after this, however, the same feeling of actual excitement, which urges him on, makes him enter more cordially into the convivial dispositions of his companions, and a man is always earnest that others should drink as he becomes unwilling to desist himself.

To add that there is but one instance in which appetite hangs about a man as a perpetual clog and dead-weight upon the reason, namely the sexual appetite, and that here the selfish habit produced by this constant state of animal sensibility seems to have a direct counterpoise given to it by nature in the mutual sympathy of the sexes. Quere also whether this general susceptibility is not itself an effect of an irritable imagination exerted on that particular subject. (See Notes to the Essay on the Inequality of Mankind.) I hope this will be sufficient to break the force of the objection as above stated, and may perhaps furnish a clue to a satisfactory account of the subject itself.

I do not think I should illustrate the foregoing reasoning so well by any thing I could add on the subject as by relating the manner in which it first struck me.—There are moments in the life of a solitary thinker which are to him what the evening of some great victory is to the conqueror and hero—milder triumphs long remembered with truer and deeper delight. And though the shouts of multitudes do not hail his success, though gay trophies, though the sounds of music, the glittering of armour, and the neighing of steeds do not mingle with his joy, yet shall he not want monuments and witnesses of his glory, the deep forest, the willowy brook, the gathering clouds of winter, or the silent gloom of his own chamber, 'faithful remembrancers of his high endeavour, and his glad success,' that, as time passes by him with unreturning wing, still awaken the consciousness of a spirit patient, indefatigable in the search of truth, and a hope of surviving in the thoughts and minds of other men. I remember I had been reading a speech which Mirabeau (the author of the System of Nature) has put into the mouth of a supposed atheist at the Last Judgment; and was afterwards led on by some means or other to consider the question whether it could properly be said to be an act of virtue in any one to sacrifice his own final happiness to that of any other person or number of persons, if it were possible for the one ever to be made the price of the other. Suppose it were my own case—that it were in my power to save twenty other persons by voluntarily consenting to suffer for them:

why should I not do a generous thing, and never trouble myself about what might be the consequence to myself the Lord knows when?—The reason why a man should prefer his own future welfare to that of others is that he has a necessary, absolute interest in the one which he cannot have in the other, and this again is a consequence of his being always the same individual, of his continued identity with himself. The difference I thought was this, that however insensible I may be to my own interest at any future period, yet when the time comes I shall feel differently about it. I shall then judge of it from the actual impression of the object, that is truly and certainly; and as I shall still be conscious of my past feelings and shall bitterly regret my own folly and insensibility, I ought as a rational agent to be determined now by what I shall then wish I had done when I shall feel the consequences of my actions most deeply and sensibly. It is this continued consciousness of my own feelings which gives me an immediate interest in whatever relates to my future welfare, and makes me at all times accountable to myself for my own conduct. As therefore this consciousness will be renewed in me after death, if I exist again at all—But stop—As I must be conscious of my past feelings to be myself, and as this conscious being will be myself, how if that consciousness should be transferred to some other being? How am I to know that I am not imposed upon by a false claim of identity?—But that is ridiculous because you will have no other self than that which arises from this very consciousness. Why then this self may be multiplied in as many different beings as the Deity may think proper to endue with the same consciousness, which if it can be renewed at will in any one instance, may clearly be so in an hundred others. Am I to regard all these as equally myself? Am I equally interested in the fate of all? Or if I must fix upon some one of them in particular as my representative and other self, how am I to be determined in my choice?—Here then I saw an end put to my speculations about absolute self-interest, and personal identity. I saw plainly that the consciousness of my own feelings which is made the foundation of my continued interest in them could not extend to what had never been, and might never be, that my identity with myself must be confined to the connection between my past and present being, that with respect to my future feelings or interests, they could have no communication with, or influence over my present feelings and interests merely because they were future, that I shall be hereafter affected by the recollection of my past feelings and actions, and my remorse be equally heightened by reflecting on my past folly and late-earned wisdom whether I am really the same being, or have only the same consciousness renewed

is me, but that to suppose that this remote can react in the reverse order on my present feelings, or give me an immediate interest in my future feelings, before it exists, is an express contradiction in terms. It can only affect me as an imaginary idea, or as an idea of truth. But so may the interests of others; and the question proposed was whether I have not some real, necessary, absolute interest in whatever relates to my future being in consequence of my immediate connection with myself, independently of the general impression which all positive ideas have on my mind. How then can this pretended unity of consciousness which is only reflected from the past, which makes me so little acquainted with the future that I cannot even tell for a moment how long it will be continued, whether it will be entirely interrupted by or renewed in me after death, and which might be multiplied in I don't know how many different beings and prolonged by complicated sufferings without my being any the wiser for it, how I say can a principle of this sort identify my present with my future interests, and make me as much a participator in what does not at all affect me as if it were actually impressed on my senses? It is plain as this conscious being may be decompounded, entirely destroyed, renewed again, or multiplied in a great number of beings, and as, whichever of these takes place, it cannot produce the least alteration in my present being, that what I am does not depend on what I am to be, and that there is no communication between my future interests, and the motives by which my present conduct must be governed. This can no more be influenced by what may be my future feelings with respect to it than it will then be possible for me to alter my past conduct by wishing that I had acted differently. I cannot therefore have a principle of active self-interest arising out of the immediate connection between my present and future self, for no such connection exists, or is possible. I am what I am in spite of the future. My feelings, actions, and interests must be determined by causes already existing and acting, and are absolutely independent of the future. Where there is not an intercommunity of feelings, there can be no identity of interests. My personal interest in any thing must refer either to the interest excited by the actual impression of the object which cannot be felt before it exists, and can last no longer than while the impression lasts, or it may refer to the particular manner in which I am mechanically affected by the *idea* of my own impressions in the absence of the object. I can therefore have no proper personal interest in my future impressions, since neither my ideas of future objects, nor my feelings with respect to them can be excited either directly or indirectly by the impressions themselves, or by any ideas

or feelings accompanying them, without a complete transposition of the order in which effects follow one another in nature.—The only reason for my preferring my future interest to that of others must arise from my anticipating it with greater warmth of present imagination. It is this greater liveliness and force with which I can enter into my future feelings, that in a manner identifies them with my present being; and this notion of identity being once formed, the mind makes use of it to strengthen it's habitual propensity, by giving to personal motives a reality and absolute truth which they can never have. Hence it has been inferred that my real, substantial interest in any thing must be derived in some indirect manner from the impression of the object itself, as if that could have any sort of communication with my present feelings, or excite any interest in my mind but by means of the imagination, which is naturally affected in a certain manner by the prospect of future good or evil.

REMARKS

ON

THE SYSTEMS OF HARTLEY AND HELVETIUS

I FIND I owe the reader two explanations, one relating to the association of ideas, from which Hartley and other writers have deduced the origin of all our affections, even of self-love itself, the other relating to the mechanical principle of self-interest stated by Helvetius.[1] It was my first intention to have given at the end of the preceding essay a general account of the nature of the will, and to have tried at least to dig down a little deeper into the foundation of human thoughts and actions than I have hitherto done. At present I have laid aside all thoughts of this kind as I have neither time nor strength for such an undertaking; and the most that I shall attempt is to point out such contradictions and difficulties in both these systems as may lessen the weight of any objections drawn from them against the one I have stated, and leave the argument as above explained in it's original force.

To begin with the doctrine of association.

The general principle of association as laid down by Hartley is this, that if any given sensation, idea, or motion be for a number of times either accompanied, or immediately followed by any other sensation, idea, or muscular motion, the recurrence of the one will afterwards mechanically give rise to that of the other. By *immediately followed* I mean *closely followed*: for suppose A to be associated with B, and B with C, A will not only produce B and C intermediately, but will

[1] I do not mean that Helvetius was the first who conceived the hypothesis here spoken of (for I do not think he had wit enough to invent even an ingenious absurdity) but it was through him I believe that this notion has attained it's present popularity, and in France particularly it has had, I am certain, a very general influence on the national character. It was brought forward in the most forcible manner by the writers of the last century, and it is expressly stated, and clearly answered by Bishop Butler in the Preface to his Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel. After Berkeley's Essay on Vision, I do not know of any work better worth the attention of those who would learn to think than these same metaphysical Discourses preached at the Rolls' Chapel.

in time produce C immediately without the intervention of B. A mathematician would perhaps here ask how this can ever be actually proved: for though it seems reasonable to suppose that the influence of A if it extend to B should also go a little farther to the next idea, and join indirectly and secretly with B in producing C, yet as the connection between A and B must be stronger than that between A and C, if in any case the connection between the former become gradually so weakened as to dissolve of itself, the latter must fail of course, and therefore C can never follow A, except when B stands equivocally between them. This question would go upon the supposition, that B and C must always be impressions of exactly the same kind and degree of strength, which is not the case. A, though more remote from C, may yet be more intimately connected with it than with B from several other causes, from the greater strength of the impression, from similarity, &c. (This implies by the bye that the effect of association depends on the conjunction of many circumstances, and principles of action, and is not simply determined by the relation of proximity or remoteness between our ideas with respect to time or place.) Thus if a person has done a number of good actions, which have been observed with pleasure by another, this approbation will be afterwards associated with the idea of the person, and the recollection of the benevolent disposition which gave birth to those actions remains when the particular manner in which it was exerted is forgotten. First, because the feeling is the principal or strongest circumstance. Secondly, the association of our ideas with moral qualities is evidently assisted, and forced into the same general direction by the simplicity and uniform character of our feelings compared with the great variety of things and actions, which makes it impossible to combine such a number of distinct forms under the same general notion.

What I have here stated is I believe the whole extent and compass of the law of association. It has been said that this principle is of itself sufficient to account for all the phenomena of the human mind, and is the foundation of every rule of morality. My design is to shew that both these assertions are absolutely false, or that it is an absurdity, and an express contradiction to suppose that association is either the only mode of operation of the human mind, or that it is the primary and most general principle of thought and action.—But first of all it will be necessary to consider the account which Hartley himself has given of this principle as depending on the mechanical communication of motion from the seat of one idea to that of the next and so on, according to a certain local arrangement of these ideas in the brain, as certainly if thought is carried on in this

manner, that is, by means of vibrations, it is difficult to conceive of it's being produced by any other means than the accidental justling of these one against the other, which is what is meant by association.

There are two or three general observations which will be of use in conducting us through this inquiry. In the first place it appears to me certain that every impression or idea is produced in such a manner as to affect or be perceived by the whole brain at once, or in immediate succession, that is, before the action ceases. For if we suppose a certain degree of resemblance to subsist between two ideas, the perception of the one will always be sure to excite a recollection of the other, if it is at all worth remembering. I mean for instance if a person should in some strange place suddenly see an excellent picture of their dead father or mother, I suppose there can be no doubt but the picture would call up the memory of the person whom it resembled with an instantaneous and irresistible force. Now this could not always happen but on the supposition that the visible impression of the picture was conveyed to every part of the brain, as otherwise it must be a mere accident whether it would ever come in contact with that part of it, where that distinct set of recollections was lodged which it was calculated to excite. It is evident that the force with which the impression of the picture acts upon the mind is subsequent to the recollection of the likeness and not the cause of it, since the picture of any other person would act physically upon my mind in the same manner. It may be worth remarking here that the strength, or habitual or recent recurrence of any idea makes it more easily recollected. I might see a picture of a person whom I had not often seen and whose face did not at all interest me at the time without recollecting whose it was, though the likeness should be never so great. The frequent recurrence of the imitation on the other hand if it has had it's usual effect renders the recollection of the object less certain or at any rate less vivid every time, till at last what remains of it is entirely lost, and confounded with the imitation.[1] Again, it is also certain that the proximity of the parts of an object to one another, or of one object to another object is of itself a sufficient and necessary reason for their recollection in succession or together, in the same order in which they were actually perceived. Unless this were the case, we could never recollect any thing at all, as every object is necessarily composed of parts, and those again of others without end. Now how are we to reconcile this with the first-mentioned inference that thought is uniformly and necessarily

[1] No doubt the picture is always looked at with a very different feeling from what it would have been, if the idea of the person had never been distinctly associated with it.

communicated to every part of the thinking substance? If thought is produced in such a manner, that the shock is immediately felt in those parts nearest the seat of the individual impression, and is indeed sure to excite thought in them without ever affecting the remote parts of the brain in the same manner, it seems strange that it's own communication over the whole brain should be so rapid and certain, while the force with which it is sent along (as implied in its confined power of producing other thoughts by simple impulse) is so unequal.

The reader will I hope have the good-nature to pardon some inconsistencies of expression in treating of this subject. In order to disprove the theory which I am combating I must first assume it's truth, and go on talking of *the seats of our ideas*, *the different parts of the brain*, *the communication of thought by impulse*, &c. till it is clearly shewn that the hypothesis to which all these expressions refer is in reality good for nothing.

Though I do not see my way out of the dilemma here stated, and find I have engaged in an undertaking I am not equal to, I think I have seen enough of the difficulties belonging to it to be able to reject the Hartleian hypothesis as directly incompatible with a fair and comprehensive view of the subject. For, first, it has been shewn above that every idea, or perception is communicated to all the parts of the brain, or to the whole sentient principle, whatever this is supposed to be. Or the same thing might be shewn from the nature of consciousness.[1] That there is some faculty of this sort which opens a direct communication between our ideas, so that the same thinking principle is at the same time conscious of different impressions, and of their relations to each other, is what hardly any person who attends in the least to what passes in his own mind and is not determined to reason himself out of his senses will I should think deny. In other words, when any two ideas or parts of an idea (for there is no difference in this respect) as those of two lighted candles, or the top and bottom of the same candle are impressed at the same time on different parts of the brain, before these ideas can be perceived in connection as making parts of a whole, or can be accompanied with a consciousness of each other's existence, we must suppose them mutually to affect the seats of action belonging to each other, or else to be united in some common principle of thought, the same comparing power being exerted upon both. Without supposing their distinct impressions thus to meet in the same point, it seems a thing impossible to conceive how any comparison can take place between different

[1] Consciousness is here and all along (where any particular stress is laid upon it) used in it's etymological sense, as literally the same with *conscientia*, the knowing or perceiving many things by a simple act.

impressions existing at the same time, or between our past, and present impressions, or ever to explain what is meant by saying, *I perceive such and such objects, I remember such and such events*, since these different impressions are evidently referred to the same conscious being, which idea of individuality could never have been so much as conceived of if there were no other connection between our ideas than that which arises from the juxtaposition of the particles of matter on which they are severally impressed. The mere juxtaposition of the parts of the thinking substance on which different ideas are impressed will never produce any thing more than the actual juxtaposition of the ideas themselves, unaccompanied by any consciousness of their having this relation to each other: for the mind in this case consisting of nothing more than a succession of material points, each part will be sensible of the corresponding part of any object which is impressed upon it, but can know nothing of the impression which is made on any other part of the same substance, except from it's reaction on the seat of the first, which is contrary to the supposition. In short, to attempt accounting at all for the nature of consciousness from the proximity of different impressions, or of their fluxional parts to each other in the brain seems no less absurd than it would be to imagine that by placing a number of persons together in a line we should produce in them an immediate consciousness and perfect knowledge of what was passing in each other's minds. If consciousness is to be deduced at all from the circumstance of place, it must be that different impressions occupy exactly the same place. One place has no identity with another: however thin the partition between one idea and another, the distinction must be as absolute and complete, and must confine each idea as effectually within it's own bounds in this fantastical mosaic-work of the brain, as if the solid skulls of ten philosophers were interposed between each. There is another consideration to be attended to, which is that sensible impressions appear to be continually made on the same part of the brain in succession:—with respect to those received by the eye, a new set of objects is almost every moment impressed on the whole organ, and consequently transmitted along the nerves to the same receptacle in the brain.[1] It follows from this last observation in particular (which is not a speculative refinement but a plain matter of fact) that the sphere

[1] Those of the touch admit of the greatest variety in this respect from the general diffusion of that sense over the whole body, and those which depend on hearing from the small part of the ear which is in general distinctly affected by sound at the same time. As to the taste and smell, the stimulants applied to these senses are such as for the most part to act on a large proportion of the organ at once, though only at intervals. The direction of smells is hardly distinguishable like that of sounds.

occupied by different vibrations is constantly the same, or that the same region of the brain belongs equally to a thousand different impressions, and consequently that the mere circumstance of situation is insufficient to account for that complete distinctness, of which our ideas are capable.

From all these considerations taken together I cannot help inferring the fallacy of the Hartleian doctrine of vibrations, which all along goes on the supposition of the most exact distinction and regular arrangement of the *places* of our ideas, and which therefore cannot be effectually reconciled with any reasoning that excludes all local distinction from having a share in the mechanical operations of the human mind. For if we suppose the succession of our ideas to be carried on by the communication of the impulse belonging to one idea to the contiguous cell, or dormitory of another idea formerly associated with it, and if we at the same time suppose each idea to occupy a separate cell which is inviolable, and which it has entirely to itself, then undoubtedly the ideas thus called up will follow one another in the same order in which they were originally excited. But if we take away this imaginary allotment of separate parcels of the brain to different ideas and suppose the same substance or principle to be constantly impressed with a succession of different ideas, then there seems to be no assignable reason why a vibratory motion accompanied with thought in passing from one part of the thinking substance to the next should not excite any other idea which had been impressed there, as well as the one with which that particular vibration had been originally associated, or why it should not by one general impulse equally excite them all. It is like supposing that you might tread on a nest of adders twined together, and provoke only one of them to sting you. On the other hand to say that this species of elective affinity is determined in it's operation by the greater readiness with which the idea of a particular impression recalls the memory of another impression which co-existed with it in a state of sensible excitement is to repeat the fact but not (that I can perceive) in any manner to account for it. Let any one compare this account with the one given by Hartley of his own principle, and he will be able to judge.

But farther, even if it could be shewn that the doctrine of vibrations accounts satisfactorily for the association of the ideas of any one sense, (as those of the sight for example) yet surely the very nature of that principle must cut off every sort of communication between the ideas of different senses, (as those of sight and hearing) which may have been associated in the order of time, but which with respect to actual situation must be farther removed from one another than

any ideas of the same sense, at whatever distance of time they may have been severally impressed. If from the top of a long cold barren hill I hear the distant whistle of a thrush which seems to come up from some warm woody shelter beyond the edge of the hill, this sound coming faint over the rocks with a mingled feeling of strangeness and joy, the idea of the place about me, and the imaginary one beyond will all be combined together in such a manner in my mind as to become inseparable. Now the doctrine of vibration appears absolutely to exclude the possibility of the union of all these into one *associated* idea, because as the whole of that principle is founded on the greater ease and certainty with which one local impression is supposed to pass into the seat of the next, and the greater force with which it acts there than it can do farther off, the idea of a visible object can never run into the notion of a sound, nor *vice versâ*, these impressions being of course conveyed along different nerves to different and very remote parts of the brain. Perhaps it will be said that all ideas impressed at the same moment of time may be supposed to be assigned to particular compartments of the brain as well as where the external objects are contiguous. To this I should answer that such a supposition does not at all account for what I have said above with respect to consciousness and the association of ideas from similarity, &c. and secondly, this supposition is neither included in Hartley's theory, nor does it seem to be compatible with it, as there is no other reason on the common material hypothesis for inferring the contiguity of our ideas in the brain than the contiguity of their external objects, and the impression of those objects on corresponding parts of the external sensible organ.

The whole of Hartley's system is founded on what seems an entirely gratuitous supposition, viz. the imaginary communication of our ideas to particular places in the brain to correspond not only with the relations of external objects, but with the order of time. This supposition can never be reconciled with the inference mentioned above (to go no farther) that thought is communicated to every part of the thinking substance by an immediate and uniform impulse. For though we should suppose that it is communicated in one manner to what may be called it's *primary seat*, and in a different manner over the rest of the brain, yet we shall still be as much at a loss as ever to shew a reason why it's primary action should always excite the associated or contiguous ideas, while it's indirect or secondary action has no power at all to excite any of the ideas, with the spheres of which it necessarily comes in contact in it's general diffusion over the whole brain, that is by it's simple impulse. This is not all. There is another circumstance which must entirely prevent the least

use being made of this distinction, which is that associated ideas are not properly such as are contiguous in place, but all such as are connected in point of time, the relation of place not being at all essential in the question, for ideas that have been impressed together are always recollected as parts of the same complex impression, without any regard to the proximity or remoteness of their direct, primary seats in the brain, considered as distinct local impressions. As has been explained above with respect to sounds and visible objects, where the association must evidently arise from what I have called their secondary, or relative actions, or, if you will, their *conscious ideas*, that is those which are not confined to a particular spot in the circumference of the brain, but affect the general principle of thought, whatever this may be, whether composed of extended, material parts, or indivisible. Now if these secondary or conscious ideas which we may represent as continually posting backwards and forwards like couriers in all directions through all quarters of the brain to meet each other and exchange accounts are in fact the only instruments of association, it is plain that the account given by Hartley of that principle falls to the ground at once, first because that account affords no explanation of any of the associations which take place in the mind, except when there is an immediate communication between the primary seats of the associated ideas; secondly, because these secondary or conscious ideas being spread over the whole brain, or rather being impressed on the same thinking principle cannot have any particular connection with or power to call up one another or the contrary from any circumstances of local distinction, which is thus completely done away.—The doctrine of vibrations supposes the order of place and the order of time to correspond exactly in all combinations of our ideas, and that it is owing to this circumstance entirely that those ideas which have been impressed nearly at the same time have afterwards a power to call up one another from the facility with which they must be supposed to pass from their own primary seats into the contiguous ones of the associated ideas. I have endeavoured to shew on the contrary not only that there is no regular local arrangement of our ideas to correspond exactly with the order in which they cohere together in the mind, but that there appears to be no distinction whatever in this respect, that they all belong absolutely to the same place or internal seat of consciousness, that this want of distinction is an evident fact with respect to the successive impressions which are made on the same parts of the body, and consequently on the same parts of the thinking substance, and that it may be deduced generally from the nature of thought itself, and the associations which arise from similarity, &c. that this principle must be entirely nugatory with

respect to the associations of the ideas of different senses, even though it should hold true with respect to those of any one sense,[1] lastly that all ideas impressed at the same time acquire a power of exciting one another ever after without any regard to the coincidence of their imaginary seats in the brain (according to the material hypothesis) and that therefore the true account of the principle of association must be derived from the first cause, viz. the coincidence of time, and not from the latter which bears no manner of proportion to the effects produced.

The account indeed which Hartley has in one place given of successive association as distinct from synchronous seems to have no necessary connection with this last-mentioned principle. He says, page 69, 'If A and B be vibrations impressed successively, then will 'the latter part of A, viz. that part which remains after the impression 'of the object ceases, be modified and altered by B, at the same time 'that it will a little modify and alter it, till at last it be quite over-'powered by it, and end in it. It follows therefore that the successive 'impression of A and B sufficiently repeated will so alter the 'medullary substance, as that when A is impressed alone, it's latter 'part shall not be such as the sole impression of A requires, but lean 'towards B, and end in *c* at last. But B will not excite *a* in a 'retrograde order, since, by supposition, the latter part of B was not 'modified and altered by A, but by some other vibration, such as C 'or D.' First of all, this account seems to imply that the associated impressions A and B are the only ones made on the mind, and that they extend over the whole medullary substance. In this case when the action of A ceases or grows very weak, we may suppose that the tendency to B will be gradually revived, and at last completely over-power that of A, because these are the only impressions existing in the mind, and it must consequently incline to one or other of them, which would be equally the case, whether they had been impressed together, or not. Otherwise we must suppose the impressions thus made successively to have a distinct local communication with each other, or there is no reason given why A should excite *b* more than any other vibration impressed on the brain in general, or on the seat of *b* in particular. We must besides this suppose the vibrations A and B to have a particular line of direction, as well as primary sphere of action in the brain to account for B's not exciting *a* in the reverse order, &c. The question is how the impression of different objects

[1] The method taken by Hartley in detailing the associations, which take place between the ideas of each of the senses one by one, saves him the trouble of explaining those which take place between the ideas of different senses at the same time.

at the same time, or in quick succession gives the idea of one of those objects a power to excite the idea of the other, though the object is absent; and it is no answer to this question to say, that A being often repeated in connection with B, when it is afterwards excited, 'leans towards B, and ends in it.' Hartley says by way of breaking the difficulty, that the latter part of A is altered and modified by B. This is evident enough while B really acts upon the senses: but why should it be modified by it in the absence of B? This modification of the latter part of A by B is not the intermediate cause of the excitement of *b*, for *b*, the representative of B, must be excited, at least imperfectly, before it can modify A (B itself being nothing) and the point is how A, or *a* excites the movement connected with B and that only, not how, supposing this connection between them to be established, the one gradually passes into the other, and ends in it. I think Hartley constantly mistakes tracing the order of palpable effects, or overt acts of the mind for explaining the causes of the connection between them, which he hardly ever does with a true metaphysical feeling. Even where he is greatest, he is always the physiologist rather than the metaphysician.[1]

Perhaps a better way to set about discovering the clue to the principle of association, setting aside all ideas of extension, contiguity, &c. would be by considering the manner in which the same conscious principle may be supposed to adapt itself to, to combine, and as it were reconcile together the actions of different objects impressed on it at once, and to all of which it is forced to attend at the same time; by which means these several impressions thus compelled into agreement, and a kind of mutual understanding one with another afterwards

[1] I have always had the same feeling with respect to Hartley (still granting his power to the utmost) which is pleasantly expressed in an old author, Roger Bacon, quoted by Sir Kenelm Digby in his answer to Brown. 'Those students,' he says, 'who busy themselves much with such notions as relate wholly to the fantasie, do 'hardly ever become idoneous for abstracted metaphysical speculations; the one 'having bulky foundation of matter or of the accidents of it to settle upon, (at the 'least with one foot:) the other flying continually, even to a lessening pitch, in 'the subtil air. And accordingly, it hath been generally noted, that the exactest 'mathematicians, who converse altogether with lines, figures, and other differences 'of quantity, have seldom proved eminent in metaphysicks or speculative divinity. 'Nor again, the professors of these sciences in the other arts. Much less can it 'be expected, that an excellent physician, whose fancy is always fraught with the 'material drugs that he prescribeth his apothecary to compound his medicines of, 'and whose hands are inured to the cutting up, and eyes to the inspection of 'anatomized bodies, should easily and with success, flie his thoughts at so towring 'a game, as a pure intellect, a separated and unbodied soul.'—I confess I feel in reading Hartley something in the way in which the Dryads must have done shut up in their old oak trees. I feel my sides pressed hard, and bored with points of knotty inferences piled up one upon another without being able ever to recollect

retain a particular tendency or disposition to unite together, that is to say, the mind when thrown back into the same state by the occurrence of any one of these ideas is of course put into the way of admitting or passing more readily to any other of the same set of ideas than to any other ideas of a different set not so blended and harmonized with it. It seems as if the mind was laid open to all the impressions which had been made upon it at any given time, the moment any one of them recalls a state of feeling habitually in unison with the rest. By touching a certain spring, all obstacles are removed, the doors fly open, and the whole gallery is seen at a single glance.—The mind has a capacity to perform any complex action the easier for having performed the same action before. It will consequently have a disposition to perform that action rather than any other, the other circumstances being the same. I imagine that association is to be accounted for on the very same principle as a man's being able to comprehend or *take in* a mathematical demonstration the better for going over it a number of times, or to recognise any well-known object, as the figure of a man for instance in the middle of a common, sooner than a stump of a tree, or piece of a rock of twice the size, and of just as remarkable a shape.—In like manner, or at least consistently with this, we may suppose, if one impression is very like another, though not *associated* with it, that the mind will in that case slide more naturally, will feel less repugnance in passing from the recollection of the one to that of the other, that is from it's actual state into a state very little different from it than into one of a totally different kind. When any particular idea becomes predominant, the turn which is thus given to the mind must be favourable to the reception or recollection of any other idea, which requires but little

myself, or catch a glimpse of the actual world without me. I am somehow wedged in between different rows of material objects, overpowering me by their throng, and from which I have no power to escape, but of which I neither know nor understand any thing. I constantly see objects multiplied upon me, but powers at work, I know no reason why one thing follows another but that something else is conjured up between them, which has as little apparent connection with either as they have with one another;—he always reasons from the concrete object, not from the abstract or essential properties of things, and in his whole book I do not believe that there is one good definition. It would be a lucid way to describe a man's character to say that he had a wise father or a foolish son, and yet this is the way in which Hartley defines ideas by stating what precedes them in the mind, and what comes after them. Thus he defines the will to be 'that idea, 'or *state of mind* which precedes action,' or 'a desire, or aversion sufficiently strong 'to produce action,' &c. He gives you the outward signs of things in the order in which he conceives them to follow one another, never the demonstration of certain consequences from the known nature of their causes, which alone is true reasoning. Nevertheless, it is not to be forgotten, that he was also a great man. See his Chapter on Memory, &c.

alteration in the state of the mind to admit it. A slight turn of the screws on which the tension of the mind depends will set it right to the point required. When the actual state of the mind agrees, or falls in with some previous tendency, the effort which the latent idea makes to pass into a state of excitement must be more powerful than it would be without this co-operation, and where the other circumstances are indifferent must always be effectual. Thus the actual feeling of warmth must have a tendency to call up any old ideas of the same kind: *e. g.* to-day being a very warm day put me in mind of a walk I took in a hot day last summer. Here however another difficulty occurs: for the very opposition of our feelings as of heat and cold frequently produces a transition in the mind from the one to the other. This may be accounted for in a loose way by supposing, that the struggle between very opposite feelings producing a violent and perturbed state of mind excites attention, and makes the mind more sensible to the shock of the contrary impression to that by which it is preoccupied, as we find that the body is more liable to be affected by any opposite extremes, as of heat and cold, immediately succeeding, and counteracting each other. Be this as it may, all things naturally put us in mind of their contraries, cold of heat, day of night, &c. These three, viz. association, similarity, and contrast I believe include all the general sources of connection between our ideas, for as to that of cause and effect, it seems to be referable (as remarked by Priestley) or at least chiefly so to the first class, that of common association.— I hope no one will think me weak enough to imagine that what I have here stated is even a remote and faint approach to a satisfactory account of the matter. Every attempt of this sort must be light and ineffectual without first ascertaining (if that were possible) the manner in which our ideas are produced, and the nature of consciousness, both of which I am utterly unable to comprehend. I have endeavoured simply to point out what it is that is to be accounted for, the general feeling with which a reflecting man should set out in search of the truth, and the impossibility of ever arriving at it, if at the outset we completely cover over our own feelings with maps of the brain, dry skulls, musical chords, pendulums, and compasses, or think of looking into the bottom of our own minds by means of any other instrument than a sharpened intellect.

What I at first proposed was to shew, that association, however we may suppose it to be carried on, is not the only source of connection between our ideas, or mode of operation of the human mind. This has been assumed indirectly, and I think proved with respect to similarity, &c. Here however a shrewd turn has been given to the argument by the Hartleians, who, admitting similarity among the

causes of connection between our ideas, deny that it is any objection to their doctrine, for that this very example is easily resolved into a case of mere association. Similarity they say is nothing but partial sameness, and that where part of a thing has been first associated with certain circumstances, and is afterwards conjoined with others, making in fact two different objects, it's recurrence in the second instance will necessarily recall the circumstances with which it was associated in the first.[1]—In general we suppose that if we meet a person in the street with a face resembling some other face with which we are well acquainted, the reason why the one puts us in mind of the other is *that the one is like the other*; and we should be little disposed to believe any one who told us seriously that in reality we had before seen the one man's nose upon the other's face, and that this old impression or very identical object brought along with it the other ideas with which it had been formerly associated. This account would be sufficiently contrary to common sense and feeling, and I hope to shew that it has as little connection with any true subtlety of thinking. No metaphysician will I am sure be disposed to controvert this, who takes the trouble accurately to compare the meaning of the explanation with the terms and necessary import of the law of association. For let an impression which I received yesterday be in every possible respect the same with the one which I received to-day, still the one impression is not the other; they are two distinct impressions existing at different times, and by the supposition associated with very different circumstances. The one from having been co-existent with certain circumstances has a power by the law of association of exciting the recollection of those circumstances whenever it is itself recollected: the other has the same power over that particular combination of circumstances with which it was associated, merely because they were so impressed together on the mind at the same moment of time. To say therefore that a particular property of an object has a power of exciting the ideas of several other properties of another object, of which it never made a part, on the principle of association, is a contradiction in terms. It's being essentially or comparatively the same with another property which did actually make part of such an object no more proves the consequences which fairly result from the principle of association than it would follow from my looking at the same object at which another has been looking, that I must forthwith be impressed with all the ideas, feelings and imaginations which have been passing in his mind at the time. This last observation has been objected to on the ground that there is no connection whatever between one man's ideas, and another's. No doubt: but then it

[1] See Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever.

follows as clearly (and that is all I meant to shew) that the abstract identity of the objects or impressions does not of itself produce this connection, so that the perception of the one must needs bring along with it the associated ideas belonging to the other. The objects or ideas are the same in both cases, if that were all: but this is not sufficient to prove that they must have the same accompaniments, or associations, because in the one case they are impressed on different minds, and in the other on the same mind at different times, which is expressly contrary to the principle of association, unless we assume by the help of a verbal sophism that the same generical idea is the same associated idea, and this again would lead to the absurd consequence above stated. It is not here necessary to give a regular definition or account of what in general constitutes sameness, or to inquire whether strictly speaking such a relation can ever be said to subsist between any two assignable objects. Such an inquiry would be quite foreign to the purpose, and I wish to avoid as much as possible all useless common-place subtleties, all such as whichever way they are determined can make no alteration in the state of the argument. It is plain in the present instance for example that when it is stated that a particular idea having been once associated with given circumstances, the *same* idea will ever afterwards excite the recollection of those circumstances, all that is meant is that the idea in the latter case must be a *production*, continuation, or properly a recollection of the former one, so as to retain the impression of the accidental modifications by which that idea was originally affected. It must be so far the same as to bear the same relation to the surrounding ideas, as to depend for what it is on what it has been, and connect the present with the past. It must be the old idea lurking in the mind with all it's old associations hanging about it, and not an entirely new impression with entirely new associations. This idea must therefore be originally derived from an individual impression in contradistinction to half a dozen different ones possessing the same absolute properties: for the whole point turns upon this, that such and such ideas have not naturally any sort of connection with certain other ideas, but that any one of these ideas having been actually associated with any of the others, this accidental relation begets a peculiar and artificial connection between them which is continued along with the remembrance of the ideas themselves.

Mr. Mac-Intosh, I remember, explained this principle in his lectures in the following manner. If, says he, any gentleman who has heard me in this place to-day should by chance pass by this way to-morrow, the sight of Lincoln's-Inn Hall will upon the principle we are now examining bring along with it the recollection of some of

the persons he has met with the day before, perhaps of some of the reasonings which I have the honour to deliver to this audience, or in short any of those concomitant circumstances with which the sight of Lincoln's-Inn Hall has been previously associated in his mind. This is a correct verbal statement, but it is liable to be misunderstood. Mr. Mac-Intosh is no doubt a man of a very clear understanding, of an imposing elocution, a very able disputant, and a very metaphysical lawyer, but by no means a profound metaphysician, not quite a Berkeley in subtlety of distinction. I will try as well as I am able to help him out in his explanation. It is clear that the visible image of Lincoln's-Inn Hall which any one has presented to his senses at any given moment of time cannot have been *previously* associated with other images and perceptions. Neither is a renewed sensible impression of a particular object the same with or in any manner related to a former recollected impression of the same object except from the resemblance of the one to the other. There can be no doubt then of the connection between my idea or recollection of Lincoln's-Inn Hall yesterday, and the associated ideas of the persons whom I saw there, or the things which I heard; the question is how do I get this idea of yesterday's impression from seeing Lincoln's-Inn Hall to-day. The difficulty I say is not in connecting the links in the chain of previously associated ideas, but in arriving at the first link,—in passing from a present sensation to the recollection of a past object. Now this can never be by an act of association, because it is self-evident that the present can never have been previously associated with the past. Every beginning of a series of associations, that is every departure from the continued beaten track of old impressions or ideas remembered in regular succession therefore implies and must be accounted for from some act of the mind which does not depend on association.

Association is an habitual relation between continuations of the same ideas which act upon one another in a certain manner simply because the original impressions were excited together. Let A B C represent any associated impressions. Let *a b c* be the ideas left in the mind by these impressions, and then let A M N represent a repetition of A in conjunction with a different set of objects. Now *a* the idea of A when excited will excite *b c* or the ideas of B C by association, but A as part of the sensible impression A M N cannot excite *b c* by association, because it has never been associated with B C, because it is not, like *a*, the production of the former impression A, but an entirely new impression made from without, totally unconnected with the first. I understand then from the nature of association how *a* will excite *b c*, but not how A excites *a*.

I understand how my thinking of Lincoln's-Inn Hall, the impression of yesterday, should also lead me to think of other things connected with that impression according to the principle of association: but I cannot see how, according to this principle, there is any more connection between my seeing Lincoln's-Inn Hall to-day, and recollecting my having seen it yesterday than there is between the palace of St. Cloud, and the hovel in which Jack Shepherd hid himself when he escaped out of Newgate. Certainly the new impression is not the old one, nor the idea of the old one. What is it then that when this second impression is made on the mind determines it to connect itself with the first more than with any other indifferent impression, what carries it forward in that particular direction which is necessary to it's finding out it's fellow, or setting aside this geographical reasoning, what is there in the action of the one on the mind that necessarily revives that of the other? All this has clearly nothing to do with association.

A question however occurs here which perplexes the subject a good deal, and which I shall state and answer as concisely as I can. I have hitherto endeavoured to shew that a particular present impression cannot excite the recollection of a past impression by association, that is, that ideas cannot be said to excite one another by association which have never been associated. But still it may be asked whether a present impression may not excite the ideas associated with any similar impression, without first exciting a distinct recollection of the similar impression with which they were associated. Now, however we may reconcile it with the foregoing reasoning, it is certainly a fact that it does do so. And I conceive it will not be difficult to account for this, according to the explanation above hinted at of the principle of association: for we may in general suppose any similar state of mind to be favourable to the readmission, or recollection of the ideas already associated *with* such a state of mind, whether the similarity is produced by a revival of the old idea, or by the recurrence of a similar external object. In this case however we must suppose that association is only a particular and accidental effect of some more general principle, not the sole-moving spring in all combinations which take place between our ideas: and still more, that similarity itself must be directly a very strong source of connection between them, since it extends beyond the similar ideas themselves to any ideas associated with them. On the other hand according to the Hartleian theory of association as carried on by the connection of different local impressions, which alone makes it difficult to admit similarity as a distinct source of connection between our ideas, I am utterly unable to conceive how this effect can ever take place, that is,

I contend that there must be in this case a direct communication between the new impression, and the similar old one before there can be any possible reason for the revival of the *associated* ideas, and then the same difficulty will return as before, why one similar impression should have a natural tendency to excite another, which tendency cannot be accounted for from association, for it goes before it, and on this hypothesis is absolutely necessary to account for it.—Whatever relates to local connection must be confined to the individual impression and cannot possibly extend to the class or *genus*. Suppose association to depend on the actual juxtaposition of two, or more local impressions which being thus accidentally brought together have thrown a sort of grappling irons over one another, and continue to act in concert in consequence of this immediate local communication. It is clear that in this case none but the individual, or numerical impressions so united can have any power over each other. No matter how like any other impression may be to any of the associated ones,—if it does not agree in place as well as kind, it might as well not exist at all; it's influence can no more be felt in the seat of the first, than if it were parcel of another intellect, or floated in the regions of the moon. Again suppose association to consist not in connecting different local impressions, but in reconciling different heterogeneous actions of the same thinking principle, 'in subduing the 'one even to the very quality of the other,' here the disposition of the mind being the chief thing concerned, not only those very identical impressions will coalesce together which have been previously associated, but any other very similar impressions to these will have a facility in exciting one another, that is in acting upon the mind at the same time, their association depending solely on the habitual disposition of the mind to receive such and such impressions when preoccupied by certain others, their local relation to each other being the same in all cases.—The moment it is admitted not to be necessary to association that the very individual impressions should be actually revived, the foundation of all the inferences which have been built on this principle is completely done away.

Association is then only one of the ways in which ideas are recollected or brought back into the mind. Another view of the subject remains which is to consider their effects after they get there as well as how they are introduced, why certain ideas affect the mind differently from others, and by what means we are enabled to form comparisons and draw inferences.

If association were every thing, and the cause of every thing, there could be no comparison of one idea with another, no reasoning, no abstraction, no regular contrivance, no wisdom, no general sense of

right and wrong, no sympathy, no foresight of any thing, in short nothing that is essential, or honourable to the human mind would be left to it. Accordingly the abettors of this theory have set themselves to shew, that *judgment*, *imagination*, &c. are mere words that really signify nothing but certain associations of ideas following one another in the same mechanical order in which they were originally impressed, and that all our feelings, tastes, habits and actions spring from the same source. As I know of no proof whatever that has, or can be given of either of these paradoxes but that many of our opinions are prejudices, and that many of our feelings arise from habit, I shall state as concisely as I can my reasons for thinking that association alone does not account either for the proper operations of the understanding, or for our moral feelings, and voluntary actions, or that there are other general, original, independent faculties equally necessary and more important in the 'building up of the human mind.' In every comparison made by the mind of one idea with another, that is perception of agreement, or disagreement, or of any kind of relation between them, I conceive that there is something implied which is essentially different from any association of ideas. Before I proceed, however, I must repeat that in this question I stand merely on the defensive. I have no positive inferences to make, nor any novelties to bring forward, and I have only to defend a common-sense feeling against the refinements of a false philosophy. I understand by association of ideas the recollecting or perceiving any two or more ideas together, or immediately one after the other. Now it is contended that this immediate succession, coexistence or juxtaposition of our ideas is all that can be meant by their comparison. It is therefore a question in this case what becomes of the ideas of likeness, equality, &c. for if there is no other connection between our ideas than what arises from positive association, it seems to follow that all objects seen, or if you please thought of together must be equally like, and that the likeness is completely done away by separating the objects or supposing them to be separated. As these ideas are some of the clearest and most important we have, it may be reasonably demanded that any attempt to account for them by resolving them into other ideas with which they have not at first sight the least connection should be perfectly clear and satisfactory. Let us see how far this has been done. It has been contended then that the only idea of equality which the mind can possibly have is the recollection of the *sensible impression* made by the meeting of the contiguous points, or ends of two strait lines for example.[1] Here two questions will

[1] See Essays by T. Cooper of Manchester. This very curious analysis was also delivered with great gravity by Mr. Mac-Intosh to the metaphysical students of

arise. The first is whether the idea of equality is merely a particular way of considering contiguity. Secondly, whether association, that is the succession or juxtaposition of our ideas can ever of itself produce the idea of this relation between them. My first object will be to inquire whether the perception of the equality of two lines is the same with the perception of the contiguity of their extremities, whether the one idea necessarily includes every thing that is contained in the other.

I see two points touch one another, or that there is no sensible interval between them. What possible connection is there between this idea, and that of their being the boundaries of two lines of equal length? It is only by drawing out those points to a certain distance that I get the idea of any lines at all; they must be drawn out to the same distance before they can be equal; and I can have no idea of their being equal without dividing that equal distance into two distinct parts or lines, both of which I must consider at the same time as contained with the same limits. If the ideas merely succeeded one another, or even coexisted as distinct images, they would still be perfectly unconnected with each other, each being absolutely contained within itself, and there being no common act of attention to both to unite them together. Now the question is whether this perception of the equality of these two lines is not properly an idea of comparison, (in the sense in which every one uses and feels these words) which idea cannot possibly be expressed or defined by any other relation between our ideas, or whether it is only a round-about way of getting at the old idea of the coincidence of their points or ends, which certainly is not an idea of comparison, or of the relation between equal quantities simply because there are no quantities to be compared. The one relates to the agreement of the things themselves one with another, the other to their local situation. There is no proving any farther that these ideas are different, but by appealing to every man's own breast. If any one should choose to assert that two and two make six, or that the sun is the moon, I can only answer by saying that these ideas as they exist in my mind are totally different. In like manner I am conscious of certain operations in my own mind in comparing two equal lines together essentially different from the perception of the contiguity of their extremities, and I therefore conclude that the ideas of equality and contiguity are not the same.

Lincoln's-Inn. I confess I like ingenuity, however misapplied, if it is but a man's own: but the dull, affected, pompous repetition of nonsense is not to be endured with patience. In retailing what is not our own, the only merit must be in the choice, or judgment. A man, however, without originality may yet have common sense and common honesty. To be a hawker of worn-out paradoxes, and a pander to sophistry denotes indeed a desperate ambition.

The second question is whether the idea of contiguity itself is an idea of mere association, that is whether it is nothing more than the recollection of a compound sensation. If by sensation is to be understood the direct impression of the parts of any outward object on corresponding parts of an extended living substance, by which means the general mass is converted from a dead into a living thing, and that this is the only difference that takes place, then I deny that this combination of living atoms, this diffusion of animal sensibility, however exquisite or thrilling to the slightest touch, will ever give the idea of *relation* of any kind whether of contiguity, coexistence, or any thing else either immediately at the time or by recollection afterwards. It has been said that *to feel is to think*, '*sentir est penser*.' I believe that this is true of the human mind, because the human mind is a thinking principle, it is natural to it to think, it cannot feel *without* thinking: but this maxim would not be at all true of such a human mind as is described by these philosophers, which would be equally incapable both of thought, and feeling as it exists in us. As this distinction is very difficult to be expressed, I hope I may be allowed to express it in the best way that I am able. Suppose a number of animalculæ as a heap of mites in a rotten cheese lying as close together as they can stick (though the example should be of something 'more drossy and divisible,' of something less reasonable, approaching nearer to pure sensation than we can conceive of any creature that exercises the functions of the meanest instinct.) No one will contend that in this heap of living matter there is any idea of the number, position, or intricate involutions of that little, lively, restless tribe. This idea is evidently not contained in any of the parts separately, nor is it contained in all of them put together. That is, the aggregate of many actual sensations is, we here plainly see, a totally different thing from the collective idea, comprehension, or *consciousness* of those sensations as many things, or of any of their relations to each other. We may go on multiplying and combining sensations to the end of time without ever advancing one step in the other process, or producing one single thought. But to what I would ask does this supposition differ from that of many distinct particles of matter, full of animation, tumbling about, and pressing against each other in the same brain, except that we make use of this brain as a common medium to unite their different desultory actions in the same general principle of thought, or consciousness? Therefore if there is no power in this principle but to repeat the old story of sensation over again, if the mind is but a sort of inner room where the images of external things like pictures in a gallery are lodged safe, and dry out of the reach of the turbulence of the senses, but remaining as distinct

from, and if I may so say as perfectly unknown to one another as the pictures on a wall, there being no general faculty to overlook and give notice of their several impressions, this medium is without any use, the hypothesis is so far an encumbrance, not an advantage. To perceive the relation of one thing to another it is not only necessary that the ideas of the things themselves should co-exist (which would signify nothing) but that they should be perceived to co-exist by the same conscious understanding, or that their different actions should be felt at the same instant by the same being in the strictest sense. If I am asked if I conceive clearly how this is possible, I answer no:—perhaps no one ever will, or can. But I do understand clearly, that the other supposition is an absurdity, and can never be reconciled with the nature of thought, or consciousness, of that power of which I have an absolute certainty in my own mind. If any one who still doubts of this will give me a satisfactory reason why he denies the same consciousness to different minds, or thinks it necessary to circumscribe this principle within the limits of the same brain but upon the supposition that one brain is one power, in some sort modifying and reacting upon all the ideas contained in it, I shall then be ready to give up my dull, cloudy, English mysticism for the clear sky of French metaphysics. Till then it is in vain to tell me that the mind thinks by sensations, that it then thinks most emphatically, then only truly when by decompounding it's essence it comes at last to reflect the naked impression of material objects. It is easy to make a bold assertion, and just as easy to deny it; and I do not know that there is any authority yet established by which I am bound to yield an implicit assent to every extravagant opinion which some man of celebrity has been hardy enough to adopt, and make others believe. It does not surely follow that a thing is to be disbelieved, the moment any one thinks proper to deny it, merely because it has been generally believed, as if truth were one entire paradox, and singularity the only claim to authority.[1]

[1] This subject of consciousness, the most abstruse, the most important of all others, the most filled with seeming inexplicable contradictions, that which bids the completest defiance to the matter-of-fact philosophy and can only be developed by the patient soliciting of a man's own spirit has been accordingly passed over by the herd of philosophers from Locke downwards. There is a short note about it in Hartley in which he flatly denies the possibility of any such thing. Lest what I have already said should therefore be insufficient to fix the attention of the reader on a subject which he may think quite exploded, I will add the account which Rousseau has given of the same subject, whose authority does not weigh the less with me because it is unsupported by the Logic of Condillac, or the book De l'Esprit.

'Me voici déjà tout aussi sûr de l'existence de l'univers, que de la mienne. Ensuite je réfléchis sur les objets de mes sensations, et trouvant en moi la faculté

I never could make much of the subject of real relations in nature. But in whatever way we determine with respect to them, whether they are absolutely true in nature, or are only the creatures of the mind, they cannot exist in nature after the same manner that they exist in the human mind. The forms of things in nature are manifold; they only become one by being united in the same common principle of thought. The relations of the things themselves as they exist separately and by themselves must therefore be very different

de les comparer, je me sens doué d'une force active que je ne savois pas avoir auparavant.

'Appercevoir, c'est sentir; comparer, c'est juger: juger et sentir ne sont pas la même chose. Par la sensation, les objets s'offrent à moi séparés, isolés, tels qu'ils sont dans la Nature; par la comparaison, je les remue, je les transporte, pour ainsi dire, je les pose l'un sur l'autre, pour prononcer sur leur différence ou sur leur similitude, et généralement sur tous leurs rapports. Selon moi, la faculté distinctive de l'être actif, ou intelligent est de pouvoir donner un sens à ce mot, *est*. Je cherche en vain dans l'être purement sensitif cette force intelligente, qui superpose, et puis qui prononce; je ne la saurois voir dans sa nature. Cet être passif sentira chaque objet séparément, ou même il sentira l'objet total formé des deux, mais n'ayant aucune force pour les replier l'un sur l'autre, il ne les comparera jamais, il ne les jugera point.

'Voir deux objets à la fois, n'est pas voir leurs rapports, ni juger de leurs différences; appercevoir plusieurs objets les uns hors des autres, n'est pas les nombrer. Je puis avoir au même instant l'idée d'un grand bâton et d'un petit bâton sans les comparer, sans juger que l'un est plus petit que l'autre, comme je puis voir à la fois ma main entière sans faire le compte de mes doigts. Ces idées comparatives, *plus grand*, *plus petit*, de même que les idées numériques d'*un*, de *deux*, &c. ne sont certainement pas des sensations, quoique mon esprit ne les produise, qu'à l'occasion de mes sensations.

'On nous dit que l'être sensitif distingue les sensations les unes des autres par les différences qu'ont entr'elles ces mêmes sensations: ceci demande explication. Quand les sensations sont différentes, l'être sensitif les distingue par leurs différences: quand elles sont semblables, il les distingue parce qu'il sent les unes hors des autres. Autrement, comment dans une sensation simultanée distingueroit-il deux objets égaux? Il faudroit nécessairement qu'il confondit ces deux objets, et les prît pour le même, sur-tout dans un système où l'on prétend que les sensations représentatives de l'étendue ne sont point étendues.

'Quand les deux sensations à comparer sont apperçues, leur impression est faite, chaque objet est senti, les deux sont sentis; mais leur rapport n'est pas senti pour cela. Si le jugement de ce rapport n'étoit qu'une sensation, & me venoit uniquement de l'objet, mes jugemens ne me tromperoient jamais, puisqu'il n'est jamais faux que je sente ce que je sens.

'Pourquoi donc est-ce que je me trompe sur le rapport de ces deux bâtons, sur-tout s'ils ne sont pas paralleles? Pourquoi, dis-je, par exemple, que le petit bâton est le tiers du grand, tandis qu'il n'en est que le quart? Pourquoi l'image, qui est la sensation, n'est elle pas conforme à son modèle, qui est l'objet? C'est que je suis actif quand je juge, que l'opération qui compare est fautive, et que mon entendement, qui juge les rapports, mêle ses erreurs à la vérité des sensations qui ne montrent que les objets.

'Ajoutez à cela une réflexion qui vous frappera, je m'assure, quand vous y aurez pensé; c'est que si nous étions purement passifs dans l'usage de nos sens, il n'y

from their relations as perceived by the mind where they have an immediate communication with each other. The things themselves can only have the same relation to each other that the ideas of things have in different minds, or that our sensible impressions must have to one another before we refer them to some inward conscious principle. Without this connection between our ideas in the mind there could be no preference of one thing to another, no choice of means to ends, that is, no voluntary action. Suppose the ideas or impressions of any two objects to be perfectly distinct and vivid, suppose them moreover to be mechanically *associated* together in my mind, and that they bear in fact just the same proportion to each other that the objects do in nature, that the one is attended with just so much more pleasure than the other, and is so much more desirable, what effect can this of itself have but to produce a proportionable degree of unthinking complacency in the different feelings belonging to each, and a proportionable degree of vehemence in the blind impulse, by which I am attached to each of them separately and for the moment? If there is no perception of the relation between different feelings, no proper comparison of the one with the other, there may indeed be a stronger impulse towards the one than there is towards the other in the different seats of perception which they severally affect, but there can be no reasonable attachment, no preference of the one to the other in the same *general* principle of thought and action. And consequently on this supposition if the objects or feelings are incompatible with each other, I, or rather the different sensible beings within me will be drawn different ways, each according to it's own particular bias, blindly persisting in it's own choice without ever thinking of any other interest than it's own, or being in the least affected by any idea of the general good of the whole sentient being, which would be a thing utterly incomprehensible.—To perceive relations, if not to choose between good and evil, to prefer a greater good to a less, a lasting to a transient enjoyment belongs only to one mind, or spirit,

auroit entr'eux aucun communication; il nous seroit impossible de connoître que le corps que nous touchons, et l'objet que nous voyons sont le même. Ou nous ne sentirions jamais rien hors de nous, ou il y auroit pour nous cinq substances sensibles, donc nous n'aurions nul moyen d'appercevoir l'identité.

'Qu'on donne tel ou tel nom à cette force de mon esprit qui rapproche et compare mes sensations; qu'on l'appelle attention, méditation, réflexion, ou comme on voudra; toujours est-il vrai qu'elle est en moi et non dans les choses, que c'est moi seul qui la produis, quoique je ne la produise qu'à l'occasion de l'impression que font sur moi les objets. Sans être maître de sentir ou de ne pas sentir, je le suis d'examiner plus ou moins ce que je sens.

'Je ne suis donc pas simplement un être sensitif et passif, mais un être actif et intelligent, et quoi qu'en dise la philosophie, j'oserai prétendre à l'honneur de penser, &c.'—EMILE, beginning of the third, or end of the second volume.

the mind that is in man, which is the centre in which all his thoughts meet, and the master-spring by which all his actions are governed. Every thing is one in nature, and governed by an absolute impulse. The mind of man alone is relative to other things, it represents not itself but many things existing out of itself, it does not therefore represent the truth by being sensible of one thing but many things (for nature, it's object, is manifold) and though the things themselves as they really exist cannot go out of themselves into other things, or compromise their natures, there is no reason why the mind which is merely representative should be confined to any one of them more than to any other, and a perfect understanding should comprehend them all as they are all contained in nature, or *in all*. No one object or idea therefore ought to impel the mind for it's own sake but as it is relative to other things, nor is a motive true or natural in reference to the human mind merely because it exists, unless we at the same time suppose it to be stronger than all others.

But to return. I conceive first that volition necessarily implies thought or foresight, that is, that it is not accounted for from mere association. All voluntary action implies a view to consequences, a perception of the analogy between certain actions already given, and the particular action then to be employed, also a knowledge of the connection between certain actions and the effects to be produced by them; and lastly, a faculty of combining all these with particular circumstances so as to be able to judge how far they are likely to impede or assist the accomplishment of our purposes, in what manner it may be necessary to vary our exertions according to the nature of the case, whether a greater or less degree of force is required to produce the effect, &c. Without this 'discourse of reason,' this circumspection and comparison, it seems to be as impossible for the human mind to pursue any regular object as it would be for a man hemmed in on all sides by the walls of houses and blind alleys to see his way clearly before him from one end of London to the other, or to go in a straight line from Westminster to Wapping. One would think it would be sufficient to state the question in order to shew that mere association or the mechanical recurrence of any old impressions in a certain order, which can never exactly correspond with the given circumstances, would never satisfactorily account (without the aid of some other faculty) for the complexity and subtle windings and perpetual changes in the motives of human action. On the hypothesis here spoken of, I could have no comprehensive idea of things to check any immediate, passing impulse, nor should I be able to make any inference with respect to the consequences of my actions whenever there was the least alteration in the circumstances in which I must

ac. If however the general statement does not convince those who are unwilling to be convinced in the subject, I hope the nature of the question will be made sufficiently clear in the course of the argument.

Secondly, it is necessary to affirm that we should suppose the imaginary or general ideas of things to be efficient causes of action. It is implied in the theory we are combating that some sort of ideas are efficient motives to action, because association itself consists of ideas. Habit can be nothing but the impulsive force of certain physical impressions surviving in their ideas, and producing the same effects as the original impressions themselves. Why then should we refuse to admit the same, or a similar power in any ideas of the same kind, because they have been combined by the imagination with different circumstances, or because a great many different ideas have gone to make up one general feeling? Why, if the inherent qualities of the ideas are not changed, should not the effects which depend on those qualities be the same also? It cannot be pretended that there is something in the nature of all ideas which renders them inadequate to the production of muscular action, the one being a mental, the other a physical essence. For ideas are evidently the instruments of association, and must therefore one way or other be the efficient causes of voluntary action. The ideas of imagination and reason must be analogous to those of memory and association, or they could not represent their several objects, which is absurd.—It is to be remembered that the tendency of any idea to produce action cannot be ascribed in the first instance to the accidental association between the original impression and some particular action, for the action is an immediate and natural consequence of the impression, and would equally follow from the same impression in any other circumstances, and ought to follow from any other idea partaking of the same general nature and properties. The proper effects of association can only apply to those cases, where an impression or idea by being associated with another has acquired a power of exciting actions to which it was itself perfectly indifferent. But this power cannot always be transferred from one impression to another, for there must be some original impression which has an inherent independent power to produce action.

I do not know how far the rules of philosophizing laid down by Sir Isaac Newton apply to the question, but it appears to me an evident conclusion of common sense not to seek for a remote and indirect cause of any effect where there is a direct and obvious one. Whenever therefore a particular action follows a given impression, if there is nothing in the impression itself incompatible with such an effect, it seems an absurdity to go about to deduce that action from

some other impression, which has no more right to it's production than that which is immediately and obviously connected with it. In general it may be laid down as a principle of all sound reasoning that where there are many things actually existing which may be assigned as the causes of several known effects, it is best to divide those effects among them, not arbitrarily to lay the whole weight of a complicated series of effects on the shoulders of some one of them, generally singled out for no other reason than because it is the most remote and therefore the least probable. For this there can be no more reason than for supposing when I see a large building standing on a number of pillars, that the whole of it is secretly upheld by some main pillar in the centre, and that all the other pillars stand there for shew, not use. The principle that the fewest causes possible are to be admitted is certainly not true in the abstract; and the injudicious application of it has I think been productive of a great deal of false reasoning. Unquestionably, where there is no appearance of the existence of certain causes, they are to be admitted with caution: we are not fancifully to multiply them *ad libitum* merely because we are not satisfied with those that do appear, much less are we to multiply them gratuitously, without any reason at all. But where the supposed causes actually exist, where they are known to exist, and have an obvious connection with certain effects, why deprive any of these causes of the real activity which they seem to possess to make some one of them reel and stagger under a weight of consequences which nature never meant to lay upon it? This mistaken notion of simplicity has been the general fault of all system-makers, who are so wholly taken up with some favourite hypothesis or principle, that they make that the sole hinge on which every thing else turns, and forget that there is any other power really at work in the universe, all other causes being set aside as false and nugatory, or else resolved into that one.—There is another principle which has a deep foundation in nature that has also served to strengthen the same feeling, which is, that things never act alone, that almost every effect that can be mentioned is a compound result of a series of causes modifying one another, and that the true cause of anything is therefore seldom to be looked for on the surface, or in the first distinct agent that presents itself. This principle consistently followed up does not however lead to the supposition that the immediate and natural causes of things are nothing, but that the most trifling and remote are something, it proves that the accumulated weight of a long succession of real, efficient causes is generally far greater than that of any one of them separately, not that the operation of the whole series is in itself null and void but as the efficacy of the first sensible cause is

transmitted downwards by association through the whole chain. Association has been assumed as the leading principle in the operations of the human mind, and then made the only one, forgetting first that nature must be the foundation of every artificial principle, and secondly that with respect to the result, even where association has had the greatest influence, habit is at best but a half-worker with nature, for in proportion as the habit becomes inveterate, we must suppose a greater number of actual impressions to have concurred in producing it.[1]

Association may relate only to feelings, habit implies action, a disposition to do something. Let us suppose then that it were possible to account in this way for all those affections which relate to old objects, and ideas, which depend on recalling past feelings by looking back into our memories. But the moment you introduce action (if it is any thing more than an involuntary repetition of certain motions without either end or object, a mere trick, and absence of mind) this principle can be of no use without the aid of some other faculty to enable us to apply old associated feelings to new circumstances, and to give the will a new direction.

Mr. Mac-Intosh in his public lectures used to deny the existence of such a feeling as general benevolence or humanity, on the ground that all our affections necessarily owe their rise to particular previous associations, and that they cannot exist at all unless they have been excited before in the same manner by the same objects. If I were disposed to enter particularly into this question, I might say in the first place that such a feeling as general benevolence or kindness to persons whom we have never seen or heard of before does exist. I should not scruple to charge any one who should deny this with the *mala fides*, with prevaricating either to himself, or others. It is a maxim which these gentlemen seem to be unacquainted with that it is necessary to strain an hypothesis to make it fit the facts, not to deny the facts because they do not square with the hypothesis. It generally happens, that, when a metaphysical paradox is first started, it is thought sufficient by a vague and plausible explanation to reconcile it tolerably well with known facts: afterwards it is found to be a shorter way and savours more of a certain agreeable daring in matters of philosophy and dashes the spirit of opposition sooner to deny the facts on the strength of the hypothesis.—Independently however of all experimental proof, the reasoning as it is applied confutes itself. It is said that habit is necessary to produce affection. Now suppose this, in what sense is the principle true? If the persons, feelings and

[1] I here speak of association as distinct from imagination or the effects of novelty.

actions must be exactly and literally the same in both cases, there can be no such thing as habit: the same objects and circumstances that influenced me to-day cannot possibly influence me to-morrow. Take the example of a child to whose welfare the attention of the parent is constantly directed. The simple wants of the child are never exactly the same in themselves, the accidental circumstances with which they are combined are necessarily varying every moment, nor are the sentiments and temper of the father less liable to constant and imperceptible fluctuations. These subtle changes, however, and this dissimilarity in subordinate circumstances do not prevent the father's affection for the child from becoming an inveterate habit. If therefore it is merely an extraordinary degree of resemblance in the objects which produces an extraordinary degree of strength in the habitual affection, a more remote and imperfect resemblance in the objects ought to produce proportionable effects. For example, the cries of a stranger's child in want of food are similar to those of his own when hungry, the expressions of their countenances are similar, it is also certain that wholesome food will produce similar effects upon both, &c. I am not here inquiring into the degree of interest which the mind will feel for an entire stranger (though that question was well answered long ago by the story of the Samaritan.) My object is to shew that as to mere theory there is no essential difference between the two cases; that a *continued* habit of kindness to the same person implies the same power in the mind as a general disposition to feel for others in the same situation; and that the attempt to reason us out of a sense of right and wrong and make men believe that they can only feel for themselves, or their immediate connections is not only an indecent but a very bungling piece of sophistry.—The child's being personally the same has nothing to do with the question. The idea of personal identity is a perfectly generical and abstract idea, altogether distinct from association. Any other artificial, and general connection between our ideas (as that of the same species) might as well pass for association.

The commentators on Hartley have either not studied or not understood him. Otherwise his system could not have been supposed to favour the doctrine of selfishness. My quarrel with it is not that it proves any thing against the notion of disinterestedness, but that it proves nothing. He supposes that the human mind is neither naturally selfish, nor naturally benevolent; that we are equally indifferent to our own future happiness or that of others, and equally capable of becoming interested in either according to circumstances. [See his account of the origin of self-love, page 370.] The difference between this account, and the one I have endeavoured to defend is

that I suppose that the idea of any particular positive known good either relating to ourselves or others is in itself an efficient motive to action, whereas according to Hartley no idea either of our own interest or that of others has the least tendency to produce any such effect except from association. He infers that there is no essential, original desire of happiness in the human mind, because this desire varies according to circumstances, or is different in different persons, and in the same person at different times according to the humour he is in, &c. This objection indeed holds true if applied to the desire of happiness as a general indefinite unknown object, that is, to a necessary, mechanical, uniform disposition in man as a metaphysical agent to the pursuit of good as an abstract essence without any regard to the manner in which it is impressed on his imagination, to the knowledge which he can possibly have of any object as good, or to his immediate disposition to be affected by it. I have however all along contended that the desire of happiness is natural to the mind only in consequence of the idea, or knowledge of it, in the same manner that it is natural to the eye to see when the object is presented to it; to which it is no objection that this organ is endued with different degrees of sharpness in different persons, or that we sometimes see better than at others. Neither can I conceive how the associated impulses, spoken of in the passage above referred to, without an inherent, independent power in the ideas of certain objects to modify the will, and in the will to influence our actions can ever in any instance whatever account for voluntary action. I need not attempt to shew that the mechanical impulses to the pursuit of our own good or that of any other person derived from past associations cannot be supposed to correspond exactly and uniformly with the particular successive situations, in which it is necessary for us to act, often with a view to a great number of circumstances, and for very complex ends. To suppose that the mechanical tendencies impressed on the muscles by any particular series of past objects can only require to be unfolded to produce regular and consistent action is like supposing that a hand-organ may be set to play a voluntary, or that the same types will serve without any alteration to print a column of a newspaper and a page of Tristram Shandy. A child for instance in going into a strange house soon after he had learned to walk would not be able to go from one room to another from the mere force of habit, that is from yielding to, or rather being blindly carried forward by the impulse of his past associations with respect to walking when at home. He would run against the doors, get entangled among the chairs, fall over the stair case: he would commit more blunders with his eyes wide open than he would otherwise do blind-folded. He

would be worse off without his understanding than without his sight. He might feel his way without his eyes, but without his understanding neither his hands nor eyes would be of any use to him. He would be incorrigible to falls and bruises. Whoever has seen a blind horse stagger against a wall and then start back from it awkward and affrighted, may have some idea of the surprise which we should constantly feel at the effects of our own actions, but not of the obstinate stupidity with which we should persist in them.

To this it is replied, that the account here given does not include all the associations which really take place: that the associations are general as well as particular, that there is the association of the general idea of a *purpose*, of the words *to walk*, *to go forwards*, &c. and that these general associated ideas, and the feelings connected with them are sufficient to carry the child forward to the place he has in view according to it's particular situation. Association they say does not imply that the very same mechanical motions should be again excited in the same order in which they were originally excited, for that long trains of active associations may be transferred from one object to another from the accidental coincidence of a single circumstance, from a vague abstraction, from a mere name. This principle does not therefore resemble a book, but an alphabet, the loose chords from which the hand of a master draws their accustomed sounds in what order he pleases, not the machinery by which an instrument is made to play whole tunes of itself in a set order.

I have no objection to make to this account of association but that nothing will follow from it, and that nothing is explained by it. Let us see how it will affect the question in dispute.—We will therefore return once more to the case of the child learning to walk. How then does this explanation account for his not running against any object which stands in his way in the pursuit of a favourite play-thing, if he has not been used to meet with the same interruption before? Why does he not go straight on in the old direction in which he has always followed it?—Because he is afraid of the blow, which would be the consequence of his doing so, and he therefore goes out of his way to avoid it. This supposes that he has met with blows before, though not in running after his ball, nor from that particular object which he dreads, nor from one situated in the same way, or connected with the same associations. But this difference is of no importance according to the gloss: for it is not necessary that his fear or the effort which it leads him to make should proceed from the recollection of a former blow recurring in it's proper place, and stopping him by mechanical sympathy, as it had actually done before, in the midst of his career. He is stopped by the idea of a pain which he has not

yet felt, and which can only affect him as a general, or representative idea of pain, the object being new, and there being nothing in his past associations in the order in which they are recalled by memory to produce the necessary action. Here then he evidently *constructs* an artificial idea of pain beyond his actual experience, or he takes the old idea of pain which subsisted in his memory, and connects it by that act of the mind which we call imagination with an entirely new object; and thus torn out of it's place in the lists of memory, not strengthened by it's connection with any old associated ideas, nor moving on with the routine of habitual impulses, it does not fail on that account to influence the will and through that the motions of the body.—Now if any one chooses to consider this as the effect of association, he is at liberty to do so. The same kind of association, however, must apply to the interest we take in the feelings of others, though perfect strangers to us, as well as to the interest we feel for ourselves. All that can ever take place in the imaginary anticipation either of our own feelings or those of others can be nothing more than some sort of transposition and modification of the old ideas of memory, or if there is any thing peculiar to this act of the mind, it is equally necessary to our feeling any interest in our own future impressions, or those of others. According to this account therefore the old idea of physical pain must be called up whenever I see any other person in the like danger, and the associated action along with it, just as much as if I were exposed to the same danger myself. This is I believe the doctrine of sympathy advanced by Adam Smith in his 'Theory of Moral Sentiments.' It is in fact neither self-love nor benevolence, neither fear nor compassion, nor voluntary attachment to any thing, but an unmeaning game of battledore and shuttlecock kept up between the nerves and muscles. But it seems to me a much more rational way to suppose that the idea does not lose it's efficacy by being combined with different circumstances, that it retains the same general nature as the original impression, that it therefore gives a new and immediate impulse to the mind, and that it's tendency to produce action is not entirely owing to the association between the original impression, and a particular action, which it mechanically excites over again. First, because the connection between the impression and action was not accidental but necessary, and therefore the connection between the idea and action is not to be attributed to association, but to the general nature of the human mind by which similar effects follow from similar causes. Secondly, if the imaginary or general idea were entirely powerless in itself except as a means of exciting some former impulse connected with physical pain, none but the very identical action formerly excited could result from it, that is

if I could not avoid an object in the same way that I had formerly done I should not attempt to avoid it at all, but remain quite helpless. Thirdly, because the ideas of future objects having no effect at all on my feelings or actions, and the connection between the original associated impressions being the strongest and most certain of all others, any particular train of mechanical impulses being once set in motion would necessarily go on in the old way unrestrained by any idea of consequences till they were stopped again by actual pain.—It is plain however that the activity of the understanding prevents this rough rebuke of experience, that the will (and our actions with it) bends and turns and winds according to every change of circumstances and impulse of imagination, that we need only foresee certain evils as the consequences of our actions in order to avoid them. The supposition that the idea of any particular motion necessary to a given end, or of the different motions which combined together constitute some regular action is sufficient to produce that action by a subtle law of association can only apply to those different motions after they are willed, not to the willing them. That is, there must be a previous determination of the will, or feeling of remote good connected with the idea of the action before it can have any effect. The idea of any action must be in itself perfectly indifferent, being always advantageous, useless, or mischievous according to circumstances. I cannot therefore see any reason according to this hypothesis why I should will or be inclined to make any exertions not originating in some mechanical impulse that happens to be strongest at the time, merely because they may be necessary to avoid an imaginary evil which of itself does not cause the slightest emotion in my mind: on the contrary, if the barely thinking of any external action is always immediately to be followed by that action without a particular warrant from the will, there could be no such thing as reasonable action among men, our actions would be more ridiculous than those of a monkey, or of a man possessed with St. Vitus's dance; they would resemble the diseased starts and fits of a madman, not the actions of a reasonable being. We should thrust our hands into the fire, dash our heads against the wall, leap down precipices, and commit more absurdities every moment of our lives than were performed by Don Quixote with so much labour and study by way of penance in the heart of the Brown Mountain. The *momentum* of the will is necessary to give direction and constancy to any of our actions; and this again can only be determined by the ideas of future good and evil, and the connection which the mind perceives between certain actions, and the attainment of the one or the prevention of the other. If our actions did not naturally slide into this track, if they did not follow the

direction of reason wherever it points the way, they must fall back again at every step into the old routine of blind mechanical impulse, and headlong associations that neither hear, nor see, nor understand any thing.—Lastly the terms *general association* mean nothing of themselves. I have done a particular action with a certain purpose, or I have had in my mind at the time the general idea of a purpose, of something useful connected with my action. What has this to do with my ability to perform any other action, be it ever so different, because it is also connected with a purpose? The associated idea either of a particular purpose, or of a purpose generally speaking can only have an immediate tendency to excite that particular action, with which it was associated, not any action whatever, merely because it may have a connection with some remote good. So of any number of actions. For let ever so many different actions have been associated with the idea of a purpose, this will not in the least enable me to perform any intermediate action, or to combine the old actions in a different order with a view to a particular purpose, unless we give to the idea of this particular purpose as a general idea of good an absolute power to controul our actions, and force them into their proper places. I grant indeed that having once admitted a direct power in ideas of the same general nature to affect the will in the same manner we may by a parity of reasoning suppose that this power is capable of being transferred by association to the most indifferent ideas, which, as far as they resemble one another, will operate as general motives to action, or give a necessary bias to the will. But if this analogy holds with respect to secondary and artificial motives which are not in their own nature allied to action, surely it must hold much more with respect to the direct, original motives themselves, the ideas of good and evil, where the power inheres in the very nature of the object. My being led to perform different actions with which the same abstract idea of utility is connected is not therefore properly owing to association, but because any ideas or motives of the same kind whether derived from a new impression, or made out by the imagination, or only general feelings must naturally influence the will in the same manner, and this impulse being once given, the understanding makes choice of such means as are perceived to be necessary to the attainment of the given object. For, after all, the execution of our purposes must be left to the understanding. The simple or direct ideas of things might excite emotion, volition, or action; but it would be the volition of the objects or feelings themselves, not of the means necessary to produce them. Feeling alone is therefore insufficient to the production of voluntary action. Neither is it to be accounted for from association. The actual means necessary to the

production of a given end are willed, not because those very means have been already associated with that particular end (for this does not happen once in a thousand times) but because those means are known to be inseparable from the attainment of that end in the given circumstances.

There is however another objection to the disinterested hypothesis, which was long ago stated by Hobbes, Rochefocault, and the author of the Fable of the Bees, and has been since adopted and glossed over by Helvetius. It is pretended that in wishing to relieve the distresses of others we only wish to remove the uneasiness which pity creates in our own minds, that all our actions are necessarily selfish, as they all arise from some feeling of pleasure or pain existing in the mind of the individual, and that whether we intend our own good or that of others, the immediate gratification connected with the idea of any object is the sole motive which determines us in the pursuit of it.

First, this objection does not at all affect the question in dispute. For if it is allowed that the idea of the pleasures or pains of others excites an immediate interest in the mind, if we feel sorrow and anxiety for their imaginary distresses exactly in the same way that we do for our own, and are impelled to action by the same motives, whether the action has for it's object our own good or that of others, the nature of man as a voluntary agent must be the same, the effect of the principle impelling him must be the same, whether we call this principle self-love, or benevolence, or whatever refinements we may introduce into our manner of explaining it. The relation of man to himself and others as a moral being is plainly determined, for whether a regard to the future welfare of himself and others is the real, or only the ostensible motive of his actions, they all tend to one or other of these objects, and to one as directly as the other, which is the only thing worth inquiring about. All that can be meant by the most disinterested benevolence must be this immediate sympathy with the feelings of others, and it could never be supposed that man is more immediately affected by the interests of others than he can be even by his own. If by self-love we understand any thing beyond the impulse of the present moment, it can be no more a mechanical thing than the most refined and comprehensive benevolence. I only contend then that we are naturally interested in the welfare of others in the same sense in which we are said to be interested in our own future welfare. Self-love used in the sense which the above objection implies must therefore mean something very different from an exclusive principle of deliberate, calculating selfishness, which must render us indifferent to every thing but our own advantage, or from the love of

physical pleasure and aversion to physical pain, which would produce no interest in any but sensible impressions.

Supposing therefore that our most generous feelings and actions were equivocal, the object only bearing a shew of disinterestedness, the motive being always selfish, this would be no reason for rejecting the common use of the term *disinterested benevolence*, which expresses nothing more than an immediate reference of our actions to the good of others, as self-love expresses a conscious reference of them to our own good, as means to an end. This is the proper meaning of the terms. If there is any impropriety in the one, the other must be equally objectionable, the same fallacy lurks under both.

Secondly, the objection is not true in itself, that is, I see no reason for resolving the feelings of compassion, &c. into a principle of mechanical self-love. That the motive to action exists in the mind of the person who acts is what no one can deny. The passion excited and the impression producing it must necessarily affect the individual. There must always be some one to feel and act, or there could be no such thing as feeling or action.[1] It cannot therefore be implied as a condition in the love of others, that this love should not be *felt* by the person who loves them, for this would be to say that he must love them and not love them at the same time, which is palpable nonsense. This absurd inference, I say, could never be implied in the common use of the terms, as it could never be imagined that in order to feel for others, we must in reality feel nothing. This distinction proves clearly that it is always the individual who *loves*, but not that he always *loves himself*; for it is to be presumed that the word *self* has some meaning in it, and it would have absolutely none at all, if nothing more were intended by it than any object or impression existing in the mind. Self-love would merely signify the love of something, and the distinction between ourselves and others be quite confounded. It therefore becomes necessary to set limits to the meaning of the term.

First, it may signify, as explained above, the love or affection excited by the idea of our own good, and the conscious pursuit of it as a general, remote, ideal thing. In this sense, that is considered with respect to the proposed end of our actions, I have shewn sufficiently that there is no exclusive principle of self-love in the human mind which constantly impels us to pursue our own advantage and nothing but that, and that it must be equally absurd to consider either self-love or benevolence as a physical operation.

Another sense of the term may be, that the indulgence of certain affections necessarily tends without our thinking of it to our immediate

[1] See preface to Butler's Sermons.

gratification, and that the impulse to prolong a state of pleasure and put a stop to whatever gives the mind the least uneasiness is the real spring and over-ruling principle of our actions. No matter whether the impression existing in my mind is a sensation or an idea, whether it is an idea of my own good or that of another, it's effect on the mind is entirely owing to this involuntary attachment to whatever contributes to my own gratification, and aversion from actual pain. Or the mind is so constructed that without forethought or any reflection on itself it has a natural tendency to prolong and heighten a state of pleasurable feeling, and instantly remove every painful feeling. This tendency must be wholly unconscious; the moment my own gratification is indirectly adverted to by the mind as the consequence of indulging certain feelings, and so becomes a distinct motive to action, it returns back into the limits of deliberate, calculating selfishness; and it has been shewn that there is nothing in the idea of our own good which makes it a proper motive of action more than that of others. There appears to be as little propriety in making the mechanical tendency to our own good the foundation of human actions. In the first place, it may be sufficient to deny the mere matter of fact, that such is the natural disposition of the human mind. We do not on every occasion blindly consult the interest of the moment, there is no instinctive, unerring bias to our own good, controuling all other impulses, and guiding them to it's own purposes. It is not true that in giving way to the feelings either of sympathy or rational self-interest (by one or other of which feelings my actions are constantly governed[1]) I always yield to that impulse which is accompanied with most pleasure at the time. It is true that I yield to the strongest inclination, but not that my strongest inclination is to pleasure. The idea of the relief I may afford to a person in extreme distress is not necessarily accompanied by a correspondent degree of pleasurable sensation to counterbalance the painful feeling his immediate distress occasions in my mind. It is certain that sometimes the one and sometimes the other may prevail without altering my purpose in the least: I am held to my purpose by the idea (which I cannot get rid of) of what another suffers, and that it is in my power to alleviate his suffering, not that that idea is always the most agreeable contem-

[1] As far as the love of good or happiness operates as a general principle of action, it is in this way. I have supposed this principle to be at the bottom of all our actions, because I did not desire to enter into the question. If I should ever finish the plan which I have begun, I shall endeavour to shew that the love of happiness even in the most general sense does not account for the passions of men. The love of truth, and the love of power are I think distinct principles of action, and mix with, and modify all our pursuits. See Butler as quoted above.

plation I could have. The mind is often haunted by painful images and recollections, not that we court their company, but that we cannot shake them off, even though we strive to do it. Why does a woman of the town always turn round to look at another finer than herself? Why does the envious man torment himself by dwelling on the advantages of his rival? Not from the pleasure it affords him. Why then should it be maintained that the feelings of compassion, generosity, &c. cannot possibly actuate the mind, but because and in as far as they contribute to our own satisfaction? Those who willingly perform the most painful duties of friendship or humanity do not do this from the immediate gratification attending it; it is as easy to turn away from a beggar as to relieve him; and if the mind were not governed by a sense of truth, and of the real consequences of it's actions, we should treat the distresses of others with the same sort of feeling as we go to see a tragedy because we know that the pleasure will be greater than the pain. There is indeed a false and bastard kind of feeling which is governed altogether by a regard to this reaction of pity on our own minds, and which therefore serves more strongly to distinguish the true. So there is a false fear, as well as a refined self-interest. We very often shrink from immediate pain, though we know that it is necessary to our obtaining some important object; and at other times undergo the most painful operations in order to avoid some greater evil at a distance.—In the sense which the objection implies, my love of another is not the love of myself but as it operates to produce my own good. The mind is supposed to be mechanically attached to, or to fly from every idea or impression simply as it affects it with pleasure, or pain. And if this were the case, it might with some propriety be said to be actuated by a principle of mechanical or practical self-love. If however there is no such principle regulating my attachment to others by my own convenience, very little foundation will be left for the mechanical theory. For, secondly, the real question is, why do we sympathize with others at all? It seems we are first impelled by self-love to feel uneasiness at the prospect of another's suffering, in order that the same principle of tender concern for ourselves may afterwards impel us to get rid of that uneasiness by endeavouring to prevent the suffering which is the cause of it. It is absurd to say that in compassionating the distress of others we are only affected by our own pain or uneasiness, since this very pain arises from our compassion. It is putting the effect before the cause. Before I can be affected by my own pain, I must first be put in pain. If I am affected by, or feel pain and sorrow at an idea existing in my mind, which idea is neither pain itself nor an idea of my own pain, I wonder in what sense this can be called the

love of myself. Again, I am equally at a loss to conceive how if the pain which this idea gives me does not impel me to get rid of it as it gives *me* pain or as it actually affects myself as a distinct, momentary impression, but as it is connected with other ideas, that is, is supposed to affect another, how I say this can be considered as the effect of self-love. The object, effort or struggle of the mind is not to remove the idea or immediate feeling of pain from the individual or to put a stop to that feeling as it affects his temporary interest, but to produce a disconnection (whatever it may cost him) between certain ideas of other things existing in his mind, namely the idea of pain, and the idea of another person. Self, mere physical self, is entirely forgotten both practically and consciously. My own good is neither the exciting cause nor the immediate result of the feeling by which I am actuated. I do not shrink from the idea of the pain which another feels as it affects myself, but it excites repugnance, uneasiness, or active aversion in my mind as it affects, or is connected with the idea of another; and it is because I know that certain actions will prevent or remove that pain from that other person according to the manner in which I have perceived effects to be connected together in nature, that I *will* those actions for that purpose, or that their ideas take hold of my mind, and affect it in such a manner as to produce their volition. In short, the change which the mind endeavours to produce is not in the relation of a certain painful idea to itself as perceiving it, but in the relation of certain ideas of external things to one another. If this is not sufficient to make the distinction intelligible, I cannot express it any better. 'Oh, but' (it will be said) 'I cannot help feeling pain when I see another in actual pain, or get rid of the idea by any other means than by relieving the person, and knowing that it exists no longer.' But will this prove that my love of others is regulated by my love of myself, or that my self-love is subservient to my love of others? What hinders me from immediately removing the painful idea from my mind but that my sympathy with others stands in the way of it? That this independent attachment to the good of others is a natural, unavoidable feeling of the human mind is what I do not wish to deny. It is also, if you will, a mechanical feeling; but then it is neither a physical, nor a selfish mechanism. I see colours, hear sounds, feel heat, and cold, and believe that two and two make four by a certain mechanism, or from the necessary structure of the human mind; but it does not follow that all this has any thing to do with self-love.—One half of the process, namely the connecting the sense of pain with the idea of it, is evidently contrary to self-love; nor do I see any more reason for ascribing the uneasiness, or active impulse which

follows to that principle, since my own good is neither thought of in it, nor does it follow from it except indirectly, slowly and conditionally. The mechanical tendency to my own ease or gratification is so far from being the real spring or natural motive of compassion that it is constantly overruled and defeated by it. If it should be answered that these restrictions and modifications of the principle of self-love are a necessary consequence of the nature of a thinking being, then I say that it is nonsense to talk of mechanical self-love in connection with a power of reflection, that is, a mind capable of perceiving the consequences of things beyond itself, and of being affected by them. To ask therefore whether if it were possible to get rid of my own uneasiness without supposing the uneasiness of another to be removed I should wish to remove it, is foreign to the purpose; for it is to suppose that the idea of another's uneasiness is not an immediate object of uneasiness to me, or that by making a distinction of reflection between the idea of what another suffers, and the uneasiness it causes in me, the former will cease to give me any uneasiness, which is a contradiction. A question might as well be put whether if pleasure gave me pain, and pain pleasure, I should not like pain, and dislike pleasure. So long as the idea of what another suffers is a necessary source of uneasiness to me, and the motive and guide of my actions, it is not true that my only concern is for myself, or that I am governed solely by a principle of self-interest.—The body has a mechanical tendency to shrink from physical pain: this may be called mechanical self-love, because, though the good of the individual is not the object of the action, it is the immediate and natural effect of it. The movement which is dictated by nature is directly followed by the cessation of the pain by which the individual was annoyed. The evil is completely removed with respect to the individual, the moment the object is at a distance from him; but it only exists as it affects the individual, it is therefore completely at an end when it ceases to affect him. The only thing necessary therefore is to produce this change in the relation of the body to the object; now this is the exact tendency of the impulse produced by bodily pain, that is, it shrinks *at* the pain and *from* the object. The being does not suffer a moment longer than he can help it: for there is nothing that should induce him to remain in pain. The body is not tied down to do penance under the discipline of external objects, till by fulfilling certain conditions, from which it reaps no benefit, it obtains a release; all it's exertions tend immediately to it's own relief. The body (at least according to the account here spoken of) is a machine so contrived, that, as far as depends on itself, it always tends to it's own good, in the mind, on the contrary, there are numberless lets and impediments that interfere with this object

inseparable from it's very nature; the body strives to produce such alterations in it's relation to other things as conduce to it's own advantage, the mind seeks to alter the relations of other things to one another; the body *loves* it's own good, for it tends to it, the understanding is not governed solely by this principle, for it is constantly aiming at other objects. To make the two cases of physical uneasiness, and compassion parallel, it would be necessary to suppose either an involuntary tendency in the muscles to remove every painful object from another through mechanical sympathy, or that the real object of compassion was to remove the nervous uneasiness, occasioned by the idea of another's pain, as an abstract sensation existing in my mind, totally unconnected with the idea which gave rise to it.

Lastly, should any desperate metaphysician persist in affirming that my love of others is still the love of myself because the impression exciting my sympathy must exist in my mind and so be a part of myself, I should answer that this is using words without affixing any distinct meaning to them. The love or affection excited by any general idea existing in my mind can no more be said to be the love of myself than the idea of another person is the idea of myself because it is I who perceive it. This method of reasoning, however, will not go a great way to prove the doctrine of an abstract principle of self-interest, for by the same rule it would follow that I hate myself in hating any other person. Indeed upon this principle the whole structure of language is a continued absurdity. Whatever can be made the object of our thoughts must be a part of ourselves, the whole world is contained within us, I am no longer John or James, but every one that I know or can think of, I am the least part of myself, my self-interest is extended as far as my thoughts can reach, I can love no one but I must love myself in him, in hating others I also hate myself. In this sense no one can so much as think of, much less love any one besides himself, for he can only think of his own thoughts. If our generous feelings are thus to be construed into selfishness, our malevolent ones must at least be allowed to be disinterested, for they are directed against ourselves, that is against the *ideas* of certain persons in our minds. If I can have no feeling *for* any one but myself, I can have no feeling *about* any one but myself. Suppose I am seized with a fit of rage against a man, and take up a knife to stab him, the quantity of malice, which according to the common notion is here directed against another, must according to this system fall upon myself. I see a man sitting on the opposite side of a table, towards whom I think I feel the greatest rancour, but in fact I only feel it against myself. For what is this man whom I think I see before me but an object existing in my mind, and therefore a part of

myself? The sword which I see is not a real sword, but an image impressed on my mind; and the mental blow which I strike with it is not aimed at another being out of myself, (for that is impossible) but at an idea of my own, at the being whom I hate within myself, at myself. If I am always necessarily the object of my own thoughts and actions, I must hate, love, serve, or stab myself as it happens. It is pretended by a violent assumption that benevolence is only a desire to prolong the idea of another's pleasure in one's own mind, because that idea exists there: malevolence must therefore be a disposition to prolong the idea of pain in one's own mind for the same reason, that is, to injure one's-self, for by this philosophy no one can have a single idea which does not refer to, nor any impulse which does not originate in self.—If by self-love be meant nothing more than the attachment of the mind to any object or idea existing in it, or the connection between any object or idea producing affection and the state of mind produced by it, this is merely the common connection between cause and effect, and the love of every thing must be the love of myself, for the love of every thing must be the love of the object exciting it. On the contrary, if by self-love be meant my attachment to or interest in any object in consequence of it's affecting me personally or from the stronger and more immediate manner in which certain objects and impressions act upon me, then it cannot be affirmed without an absurdity that all affection whatever is self-love. So if I see a man wounded, and this sight occasions in me a painful feeling of sympathy, I do not in this case feel for myself, because between that idea or object impressed on my mind and the painful feeling which follows there is no such positive connection as there is between the infliction of the same wound on my own body; and the physical pain which follows it. Will it be pretended by any one, on whose brain the intricacies of metaphysics have not had the same effect as the reading of romances had on the renowned knight of La Mancha, that a piece of wood which I see a man cutting in pieces, and so is an object existing in my mind, is a part of myself in the same sense as a leg or an arm? For my own part, as I am not at all affected by the hacking and hewing which this piece of wood receives, or all the blows with which it rings, which are to me mere harmless flourishes in the air, it seems to me a very different thing. The one idea is myself in a simple, very abstract sense indeed, the other idea is myself in the common emphatical sense, it is a reduplication or aggravation of the idea, the object becomes myself by a double *right*, I am sensible *in* the object as well as *to* it. I should say, then, that when the sight of another person wounded excites a feeling of compassion in my mind, this is not a selfish feeling in any narrow or



degrading sense of the word, which is the only thing in dispute. (If selfishness is to mean generosity, there is an end at once of the dispute.) And that for this plain reason, that the connection between the visible impression and the feeling of pain is of a totally different kind from the connection between the feeling of pain, and the same wound when inflicted on my own body. The one is an affair of sensation, the other is entirely an affair of imagination. My love of others cannot therefore be built upon the love of myself, considering this last as the effect of 'physical sensibility,' and the moment we resolve self-love into the rational pursuit of a remote object, it has been shewn that the same reasoning applies to both, and that the love of others has the same necessary foundation in the human mind as the love of ourselves.



NOTES

NOTES

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ESSAY I. ON THE PROSE STYLE OF POETS

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1. *Do you read*, etc. See vol. viii. p. 319 (*A View of the English Stage*).

5. *Feathered, two-legged things.*

'That unfeather'd two-legged thing, a son.'

Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 170.

Unpleasing flats and sharps. Cf. 'Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.' *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5.

His Muse has been silent. Waverley was published in 1814, the *Lord of the Isles* in 1815; other novels followed, and, with the exception of *Harold the Dauntless*, published in 1817, Sir Walter's work was confined to novels until the issue of *Halidon Hill* in 1822. Scott publicly acknowledged his authorship of the the *Waverley Novels* on Feb. 23, 1827.

6. *The translation of Ossian's poems.* James Macpherson's (1736-1796) so-called translations were published in 1761-1763.

Shaftesbury's Characteristics. Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times (1711), a collection of the works of Anthony Ashley Cooper (1671-1713) third Earl of Shaftesbury, who, says Sidgwick, was 'the first to make psychological experience the basis of ethics.' Mr. W. C. Hazlitt says that Hazlitt's attention was drawn to this work in Baskerville's edition, which his father is represented as reading in the oil painting executed in 1804.

Foregone conclusion. Othello, III. 3.

Horne Tooke. John Horne Tooke (1736-1812) was elected Member for Old Sarum in 1801, after unsuccessfully contesting Westminster in 1790 and 1797.

The Portraits of Kneller, Richardson, and others. Sir Godfrey Kneller (1648-1723), painter of the Kit-Cat Club Portraits, and Jonathan Richardson (c. 1665-1745), who, after Kneller's death, was considered the head of his profession.

7. *He murmurs by the running brooks.* Wordsworth's 'A Poet's Epitaph.'

Charles Fox. Charles James Fox (1749-1806).

Lord Stormont. David Murray (1727-1796), diplomatist and statesman, second Earl of Mansfield (1793) and eldest son of David, sixth Viscount Stormont, who died in 1748.

8. *To come trippingly off the tongue. Hamlet*, III. 2.

Invita Minerva. 'Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva,' Horace, *De Arte Poet.*, 385.

9. *Like Goldsmith . . . a Noble Lord.* Prior, in his *Life of Goldsmith*, II. pp. 66-68,



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refers to this as a 'ludicrous story' which has 'long been told.' He describes it as 'wholly a fabrication.'

10. *Treads the primrose path. Hamlet*, I. 3.
The highest [brightest] *heaven of invention. King Henry V.* Prologue.
He is making it not fanciful [critical]. *Othello*, II. 1.
Bristol-stones. Brilliant crystals of colourless quartz, found on St. Vincent's Rocks near Bristol, go by the name of Bristol Diamonds.
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear. 1 *King Henry IV.*, I. 3.

11. *To make us heirs.* Wordsworth's 'Personal Talk,' *Poems of Sentiment* etc. [by heavenly lays].
Like beauty making beautiful old rime. Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, 106.
Letter to a Noble Lord. Published 1796.

12. *Buttress, fairest . . . pendent bed. Macbeth*, I. 6.
At one fell swoop. Macbeth, IV. 4.
Sharp and sweet. Cf. 'As sweet as sharp.' *All's Well that Ends Well*, IV. 4.

13. *From Windsor's heights. Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.* ['Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey'].
The so much admired description. Speech on the motion made for papers relative to the directions for charging the Nabob of Arcot's private debts to Europeans on the Revenues of the Carnatick, February 28th, 1785.
The Abbé Sieyes . . . 'pigeon-holes.' Burke's *A Letter to a Noble Lord*, p. 112 (*Works*, Bohn, V.).
The comparison of the Duke of Bedford. A Letter to a Noble Lord, (*Ib.*) p. 124.
That sea-beast. Paradise Lost, I. 200-2.
Put his hook in his nostrils. The Book of Job, xli. 1-2.
The death of Lord Castlereagh. Robert Stewart (1769-1822), Viscount Castlereagh 1796, and second Marquis of Londonderry 1821. See vol. III. *Political Essays*, note to p. 39. He committed suicide in a fit of insanity.

14. *Mr. Montgomery.* James Montgomery (1771-1854) began the *Sheffield Iris* in 1794, and edited it until 1825.

15. *Pain have been said to marred Satan's form.* The reply of Edmund Waller to Charles II., who had complained of the inferiority of the poet's verses to the Restoration as compared with his panegyric on Cromwell.
Forlorn may dream. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, II. 915. 'In confusion march forlorn.'

16. *Old Fuller, and Burton, and Latimer.* Thomas Fuller (1608-1661) of the *Worthies* (1662); Robert Burton (1577-1640) of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621); and Hugh Latimer (1491-1555), Bishop, and author of *The Ploughers* (1549).
The sub-sheriff. Robert Southey (1774-1843) was made poet-laureate in 1813.
Extravagant and erring spirit. Hamlet, I. 1.
Steals in secret. Cf. 'But stoops to Truth, and moralizes his song.' Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, l. 341.
The wonder of Mercury. Love's Labour's Lost, V. 2.

16. *Wat Tyler.* Published 1817.
The decline of Kings, and Exile of the Emperors. Leigh Hunt's poem, *The Story of Rimini*, was published in 1816. The first number of *The Examiner, a Sunday Paper on Politics, Domestic Economy and Theatricals*, appeared on Jan. 3, 1808.

17. *His Majesty's Ministers.* This paper lasted from Oct. 13, 1811 to March 21, 1821. A second series lasted from March 28, 1821 to Dec. 13, 1821.



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ESSAY II. ON DREAMS

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From *The New Monthly Magazine*, 'Table Talk, VI.,' 'Dreaming,' No. 27, Vol. 7, 1823.

17. *Dr. Spurzheim.* J. G. Spurzheim, phrenologist (1776-1832). See *The Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, founded on an Anatomical and Physiological Examination of the Nervous System in general, and of the Brain in particular*, 1815. See also the Essay on p. 137, *et seq.*, *ante*, 'On Dr. Spurzheim's Theory.'

18. *Imparted in dreadful secrecy. Hamlet*, I. 2.

21. *That which was now a horse. Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 14.

22. *Heat-oppressed brain. Macbeth*, II. 1.

24. *Bishop Atterbury.* Francis Atterbury (1662-1732), Bishop of Rochester, Jacobite and controversialist, and correspondent of Pope and Swift. See also vol. VIII. *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, p. 14.

Intus et in cute. Persius, *Sat.* III. 30.

The New Eloise. Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), Sixième Partie, Lettre XII.

ESSAY III. ON THE CONVERSATION OF AUTHORS

From *The London Magazine*, 'Table Talk, III.,' Sep. 20, 1820, signed 'T., Winterslow Hut,' vol. 2. The footnote which follows was not reprinted from the Magazine. The Essay was also published as 'Table Talk, V.' *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 24, Vol. 5, 1822. See the Essay 'On Persons one would wish to have seen.'

'Of all persons spouters at Debating Societies are the most intolerable and troublesome as acquaintance. They have a constant desire to hear themselves talk, and never know what any one else wishes to hear. They talk incessantly, and say nothing. They are loud, offensive, and common-place. They try to get the ear of the company as they get the ear of the Chair, which, having got, they will not let go. They bait some unpretending individual (as if it was a case-hardened antagonist) with gross and vapid assurance, and turn a drawing-room into a bear-garden. They have all the prolixity and unwieldiness of authorship, without any of the solidity, and have all the ambition of orators to shine, without the ability, the excuse, or the inclination on the part of others to attend to them. I know one of this class in particular who has no more business in any party of ladies and gentlemen, with his splay-foot manners and long train of awkward speeches, than the Dragon of Wantley.'

25. *And of his port.* Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, 69.

He is one that cannot make a good leg. The Return from Parnassus, II. 6. See vol. V., *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, p. 284.

Tull's Husbandry. New Horse-hoing Husbandry, or an Essay on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation; wherein is shewn a sort of Vineyard Culture into the Corn Fields, in order to increase their Product, and diminish the Common Expense by Instruments described in the Cuts. By Jethro Tull (1733). The Fourth edition contained an Introduction by William Cobbett. See also vol. VI., *Table Talk*, p. 102 and note.

The Philosopher of Botley. William Cobbett (1762-1835), who settled at Botley, Hampshire, in the early years of the nineteenth century.

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26. *Dilworth's Spelling Book.* ? Thomas Dilworth's *A New Guide to the English Tongue*, an eighteenth century book.
Fearn's Treatise on Contingent Remainders. Charles Fearne's (1742-1794) *An Essay on the Learning of Contingent Remainders and Executory Devises* (1772). a book which made him an authority.
Etherial mould, sky-tinctured. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, II. 139, and V. 285.
Breathe in other air less pure. *Paradise Lost*, XI. 284.
Confined and cabin'd in. *Macbeth*, III. 4 ; 'cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in.'
Verily we have our reward. *S. Matthew*, VI. 2.
27. *Should go about to cozen fortune.* *Merchant of Venice*, II. 9.
Because we are scholars [virtuous]. *Twelfth Night*, II. 3.
27. *The wretched slave.* *King Henry V.* IV. 1.
28. *Tell his tale.* Milton's *L'Allegro.*
Stocks and stones. 'You blocks, you stones, etc.' *Julius Cæsar*, I. 1.
29. *Miss* ——. The reference is probably to Fanny Burney (1752-1840), and her novels *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782).
Whose is the superscription? *S. Matthew*, XXII. 20.
G— C—. Probably Godwin and Coleridge.
32. *The fear of being silent strikes us dumb* ['makes us mute']. Cowper, *Conversation*, 352.
33. *Grimm's Memoirs.* Colburn published in 1813 an abridgment in 4 vols. of the *Mémoires historiques, littéraires et anecdotiques* of Frederic Melchior, Baron de Grimm (1723-1807). They are full of entertaining information concerning eighteenth century French writers. See Vol. I. *The Round Table*, p. 131 *et seq.*
We had good talk, sir. Boswell's *Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, II. 66.
I once knew a very ingenious man. Probably Sir John Stoddart, Hazlitt's brother-in-law. He was a friend of the Bourbons. See vol. III. *Political Essays*, p. 169 *et seq.*
Sterne . . . Yorick. *A Sentimental Journey:* The Passport, Versailles.
34. *Villainous, and shews a pitiful ambition.* *Hamlet*, III. 2.
When Greek meets Greek. 'When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war.' Nathaniel Lee's (1655-1692) *Alexander the Great*, IV. 2.
C——. Coleridge.

ESSAY IV. THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

35. *L——'s.* Lamb's. See the chapter entitled 'Lamb's Wednesdays' in the *Memoirs of W. Hazlitt*, Vol. I. p. 271 *et seq.*
The Small-coal man's musical parties. Thomas Britton (1654-1714), a dealer in small coal and a collector of every musical book he could meet with. He was frightened to death by a ventriloquist.
John Buncle. See Vol. I. *The Round Table*, p. 51 *et seq.*, and Lamb's Essay on 'Imperfect Sympathies.'
36. *And, in our flowing cups.*

> 'Then shall our names,
> Familiar in their mouths as household words . . .
> Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.'
> *King Henry V.* IV. 3.

The cartoons at Hampton Court. See Hazlitt's essay on 'The Pictures at Hampton Court.'
A list of persons. See the essay entitled 'On Persons one would wish to have seen.'

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36. *C——.* Coleridge, here and throughout the essay.

37. *Ned P——.* Edward Phillips, secretary to Charles Abbott, Speaker of the House of Commons. See Lamb's *Letters*, ed. Hazlitt, I. pp. 76, 419, etc.

Captain ——. Rear-Admiral James Burney (1750-1821), brother of Fanny Burney and author of the famous *Chronological History of the Voyages and Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean* (1803-1817), 5 vols. He sailed with Captain Cook in two of his voyages.

Jem White, the author of Falstaff's Letters. Original Letters, etc., of Sir John Falstaff and his Friends, now first made public by a Gentleman, a descendant of Dame Quickly, from genuine MSS. which have been in the possession of the Quickly Family near four hundred years (1796). See Lamb's *Letters*, ed. Hazlitt, I. 10, 90, etc. and *The Lambs*, 1897, pp. 24-6.

Turning like the latter end of a lover's lute. Letters of Sir John Falstaff, etc. (see above), in a letter from 'Davy to Shallow.' Said of Master Abram, who dies of love for sweet Anne Page. See Lamb's review of the *Letters* in *The Examiner*, Sep. 5, 1819, and Leigh Hunt's reprint of it in *The Indicator*, Jan. 24, 1821. Lamb was suspected of having had a share in his friend and schoolmate's book.

A——. William Ayrton (1777-1858), musical critic and editor of Charles Knight's *Musical Library*.

Mrs. R——. Mrs. Reynolds, Lamb's 'sage woman.'

M. B. Martin Charles Burney, Lamb's friend, the son of Admiral Burney.

The author of 'the Road to Ruin.' Thomas Holcroft. See Vol. II. p. 121 *et seq.*

The Critique of Pure Reason. Immanuel Kant's work was published in 1781.

Mitre-court. In the Temple, where the Lambs resided for eight years at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

38. *The Biographia Literaria.* Coleridge's book was published in 1817.

Like Angels' visits. 'Like those of angels, short and far between.' Blair's *The Grave*, 582. Cf. Vol. V. *Lectures on the English Poets*, p. 150.

Mr. Douce of the Museum. Francis Douce (d. 1834), antiquarian, Shakespearian scholar, and keeper of manuscripts in the British Museum.

L. H—— . . . tropical blood. Leigh Hunt's father, Isaac Hunt, was a Barbadian.

Aliquando sufflaminandus erat. Probably quoted from Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*, LXIV., De Shakespeare Nostrati. See Vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 336.

39. *Mr. Northcote.* James Northcote (1746-1831).

40. *Hear a sound so fine.* James Sheridan Knowles's *Virginius* (1820), V. 2.

41. *Fuseli.* Heinrich Fuessly or Henry Fuseli, portrait-painter and art critic (1741-1825). Cf. Vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 233.

Curran. John Philpot Curran(1750-1817), the Irish advocate.

Mrs. Inchbald. Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821), novelist, dramatist and actress.

Mary Woolstonecroft. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1759-1797), of the *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792).

From noon to dewy eve. Paradise Lost, I. 743.

A Table Talk. See note on source of this essay, above.

Peter Pindar. John Wolcot, 'Peter Pindar' (1738-1819), physician, satirist and poet.

Mrs. M——. Mrs. Montagu, Basil Montagu's third wife, the widow of Thomas Skepper and mother (by Skepper) of Mrs. Bryan Waller Procter. She married Montagu about 1806.

42. *H—t's.* Hunt's.



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42. *N——'s.* Northcote's.
H——y——dn's. Haydon's.
A Doctor Tronchin. Theodore Tronchin (1709-1781), Genevan physician and friend of Rousseau.
Sir Fopling Flutter. In Sir George Etherege's comedy *The Man of Mode.*
For wit is like a rest. Master Francis Beaumont's Letter to Ben Jonson, printed in Beaumont and Fletcher's Comedies (1647) [the best gamesters].
L—— once came down. To Winterslow. See Vol. VI. *Table Talk*, notes to pp. 90 and 188.
Like the most capricious poet [honest] *Ovid. As You Like It*, III. 3.
Walked gowned. Lamb's *Sonnet*, written at Cambridge, August 15, 1819.
The person I mean. Undoubtedly George Dyer. See Lamb's description of him in 'Oxford in the Vacation' (*Essays of Elia*).

ESSAY V. ON REASON AND IMAGINATION

44. *This breathing world. King Richard III.*, I. 1.
45. *In the world's volume. Cymbeline*, III. 4. 'Seems as of it.'
There are more things. Hamlet I. 5.
46. *The shadows in Plato's cave. The Republic*, Book VII.
As mice in an air-pump. Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, V. p. 142). Cf. also Young, *Love of Fame*, V. 177, and *The Spectator*, No. 21.
All the mighty world of eye and ear. Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey.*
The Last Moments of Mr. Fox. Circumstantial details of the Long Illness and Last moments of the Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox, together with some strictures on his Public and Private Life, 1806. The remark about Burke's style does not seem to have been made by Lord Holland.
Lord Holland. Henry Richard Vassall Fox, third Lord Holland (1773-1840).
Words that glow. 'Thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, 110.
48. *Granville Sharp.* The abolitionist (1735-1813), whose Memoirs by Prince Hoare were published in 1810.
49. *Mr. Bentham.* See Vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, pp. 189, *et seq.*
Paley's Moral Philosophy. William Paley's (1743-1805) *Moral and Political Philosophy* was published in 1785.
Tucker's Light of Nature. Abraham Tucker's (1705-1774) *The Light of Nature Pursued* (7 vols., 1768-1778) was abridged by Hazlitt. See Vol. IV. of the present edition, pp. 371-385.
50. *The tyrant's plea. Paradise Lost*, IV. 393.
Casts its shadow before. Campbell's *Lochiel's Warning.*
51. *The classical administration of Mr. Canning.* The oratory of George Canning (1770-1827) was noted for its classical turn.
Ex uno omnes. Cf. 'ab uno disce omnes,' Virgil's *Æneid*, II. 65-6.
What can we reason. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. I. 18.
52. *A breath can mar* [make] *them.* Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, 54.
His Social Contract. Published 1762.
54. '*Duchess of Malfy.*' Webster's tragedy (1623).
Give the mind pause. Cf. 'Give us pause.' *Hamlet*, III. 1.
One touch of nature. Troilus and Cressida, III. 3.
Thou hast no speculation. Macbeth, III. 4.
55. *Both at the first and now. Hamlet*, III. 2.
To feel what others are. Gray, *Ode to Adversity.*

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ESSAY VI. ON APPLICATION TO STUDY

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 35, Vol. VIII., 1823, 'Table Talk, X.'

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55. *Wilson the Painter.* Richard Wilson (1714-1782), 'The English Claude.'

56. *Morland.* George Morland (1763-1804), painter of country scenes and humble life.

Invita Minervâ. See *ante*, note to p. 8.

The labour we delight in. Macbeth, II. 1.

Denner. Balthasar Denner, a German portrait painter (1685-1749).

To him a kingdom was. Cf. 'My mind to me a kingdom is,' by Sir Edward Dyer.

A lucid mirror. Cowper, *The Task*, I. 701-2.

Begun in gladness. Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*, St. 8.

57. *The Children in the Fiery Furnace. Daniel*, iii. 6.

Terræ filii. Cf. Persius, *Sat.* VI. 59, 'Terræ est jam filius.'

Highest [brightest] *Heaven of invention. King Henry V.* Prologue.

58. *Nice customs curtesy. King Henry V.* v. 2.

A jest's prosperity. Love's Labour's Lost, v. 2.

59. *The random, blindfold blows.*

> 'Strike in the dark, offending but by chance,
> Such are the blindfold blows of Ignorance.'
>
> Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, I. 323-4.

Had drawn in their breath and puffed it forth again.

> 'As fast
> As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
> Like breath.'
>
> Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, v. 5.

The sounding cataract. Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey.*

60. *Propulsive force.* Cf.

> 'Like to the Pontic sea
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er feels retiring ebb, etc. *Othello*, III. 3.

Grows with our growth. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epis. II. 136.

61. *The Prince of Painters.* The title is generally given to Parrhasius, the Greek painter (c. 400 B.C.), but Hazlitt refers to Raphael.

Salvator. Salvator Rosa, Neapolitan painter, musician and poet (1615-1673).

Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses. Published 1771, etc.

The Rev. W. Shepherd. His *Life of Poggio Bracciolini* was published at Liverpool in 1802.

62. *Unfold the book. Hamlet*, I. 5.

Spiritus precipitandus est. See Vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 309.

Mr. Cobbett. See Vol. IV., *The Spirit of the Age*, pp. 334 *et seq.*

63. *Perseverance, dear my lord. Troilus and Cressida*, III. 3.

64. *Ned Softly, in the Tatler.* See No. 163, April 25, 1710.

65. *Never ending, still beginning.* Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 102. Also cf. 'Still ending and beginning still,' Cowper's *The Task*, III. 627.

Physician, heal thyself. S. Luke, iv. 23.

66. *Dr. Burney.* Charles Burney the elder (1726-1814), historian of music.

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ESSAY VII. ON LONDONERS AND COUNTRY PEOPLE

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 32, vol. VIII. 1823, 'Table Talk, VII.'

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66. *Mr. Blackwood . . . Cockney.* See Vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 98.

67. *Beyond Hyde Park.* Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, v. 2.

68. *He is owner of all he surveys.* 'I am monarch of all I survey.' Cowper's *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk.*

69. *A barker in Monmouth Street.* A shop-tout or sham auctioneer. See vol. VI. *Mr. Northcote's Conversations*, note to p. 459.

A slop-seller in Radcliffe Highway. It will be remembered that the Marrs kept a lace and pelisse warehouse, 29 Ratcliffe Highway. See De Quincey's *Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts.*

Pennant. Some Account of London, 1790. 4to. A well-known and much appreciated topographical account that passed through several editions in the early years of last century.

Where Hicke's Hall formerly stood. Hicks's Hall, formerly in St. John Street, Clerkenwell. The milestones on the Great North Road were measured from here.

70. *Cider-Cellar.* The tavern at 20, Maiden Lane, a favourite resort of Porson's, who furnished the Latin motto over the door, 'Honos erit huic quoque homo.'

Shorter excursions tries. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 737-8.

White-conduit House. For this (Pentonville) and Bagnigge Wells (King's Cross) see Vol. IV. note to p. 108.

Rosemary Branch. At Peckham. See Vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 88.

Catch the breezy air. Wordsworth, 'Lines written in Early Spring' (*Lyrical Ballads*, 1798).

There's nought so sweet on earth. One of Moore's 'Irish Melodies.'

Brahams. John Abraham, tenor singer (1774-1856). 'He was,' said Sir Walter Scott, 'a beast of an actor, but an angel of a singer.' He began life by selling lead pencils in London streets as a boy, made an enormous fortune as the greatest tenor singer of his day, and squandered it in building St. James's Theatre and buying the Colosseum in Regent's Park (See Vol. VI. *Mr. Northcote's Conversations*, note to p. 429).

Durusets. J. B. Duruset, singer (See the *Literary Gazette* of June 26 and July 3, 1824).

71. *An hour by St. Dunstan's clock.* Cf. 'We rose both at an instant, and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock.' 1 *King Henry IV.* v. 4.

Copenhagen-house. A tavern and tea-garden in North London between Maiden Lane and Hogbush Lane. See Vol. VI. *Table Talk*, p. 86-89.

72. *For how should the soul of Socrates.* *The Road to Ruin*, Act III. 2.

Hole in the Wall. In Chancery Lane, kept by Randall the pugilist. See Vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 202.

The poet Jago. Richard Jago (1715-1781), author of *Edge Hill.*

Anthony Collins. The deist (1676-1729), author of a *Discourse of Freethinking* (1713).

73. *Mr. Dunster . . . the fishmonger in the Poultry.* See *Memoirs of W. Hazlitt.* II. 310. His real name was, apparently, Fisher, of Duke Street, St. James's.

74. *The Story of the King of Bohemia.* *Tristram Shandy*, viii. 19.

76. *See Round Table, Vol. II. p. 116.* See Vol. I. pp. 122, *et seq.*

This bottle's the sun of our table. R. B. Sheridan's *The Duenna*, III. 5.

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76. *Bannister, King.* John Bannister (1760-1836), Thomas King (1730-1805).
Mr. Justice Shallow. 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2.

77. *A species alone.* 'The Phœnix Pindar is a vast species alone.' Cowley, *The Praise of Pindar.*

ESSAY VIII. ON THE SPIRIT OF OBLIGATIONS

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, 'Table Talk, XI.,' No. 37, Vol. X. 1824.

78. *Nihil humani.* Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*, I. 1.

80. *Make mouths at the invisible event. Hamlet*, IV. 4.
Born for their use, etc. Young's *The Revenge*, V. 2.

81. *Wise saws. As You Like It*, II. 7.

82. *Mr. Wilberforce.* William Wilberforce (1759-1833), the parliamentary leader of the anti-slavery cause. See Vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, pp. 331, *et seq.*

83. *If to their share.* Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, II., 17-18.

> 'If to her share some female errors fall,
> Look on her face, and you 'll forget 'em all.'

A Howard. John Howard (1726-1790), prison philanthropist.
A Sir Hudson Lowe. 1769-1844. As jailor of Napoleon in St. Helena he endured much obloquy.
Charity covers a multitude of sins. 1 *Peter*, iv. 8.
The meanest peasant on the bleakest mountain. Sterne's *Sentimental Journey.* The Bourbonnois.
Talma. François Joseph Talma (1763-1826), one of the greatest of French tragic actors.

84. *Mr. Justice Fielding.* William, eldest son of the novelist (1748-1820). He was magistrate for Westminster.
Colonel Bath. In *Amelia.*
Administer to a mind diseased. Macbeth, V. 3.

85. *A little lower than the angels. Psalms* viii. 5.
And when I think that his immortal wings. Heaven and Earth, Part I. Scene 1.
The person whose doors I enter with most pleasure. ? Northcote's.

86. *Enter* [Open] *Sesami.* The words that opened the cave door in *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.*

87. *The late Mr. Sheridan.* Richard Brinsley Sheridan died in 1816.
Coin his smile for drachmas. 'I had rather coin my heart, and drop my blood for drachmas.' *Julius Cæsar*, IV. 3.

ESSAY IX. ON THE OLD AGE OF ARTISTS

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 33, Vol. VIII., 1823, 'Table Talk, VIII.'

88. *Mr. Nollekens.* Joseph Nollekens, died in 1823.
A man's a man for a' that.' Burns, 'Is there for honest poverty.'

89. *Chantry.* Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey (1781-1841). The wealth he accumulated by means of his art was given to the Royal Academy for the purchase of works of art executed in Great Britain.
Have wrought himself to stone. Cf. 'I have not yet forgot myself to stone.' Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 24.
As when a vulture on Imaus bred. Paradise Lost, III. 431.



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89. *Bernini.* Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), painter, sculptor and architect. He was called the Michael Angelo of his times.

Roubilliac. Louis Francis Roubilliac, French sculptor (d. 1762). He executed the statue of Sir Isaac Newton, Trinity College, Cambridge. The monument to the Duke of Argyle, in Westminster Abbey, is his.

Day. Alexander Day, miniature painter and picture-dealer (1772-1841).

Barry. James T. Barry, painter and art critic (1741-1806), who was patronised by Burke.

And by the force of bleur illusion.

'As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion.'

Macbeth, III. 5.

See also 'blear illusion,' *Comus*, 155, and vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 214, where the same combination occurs.

90. *Flaxman.* John Flaxman (1755-1826), sculptor and designer.

Cosway. Richard Cosway (d. 1821), the miniaturist.

Bears a charmed life. Macbeth, V. 7.

Exhibition at Somerset-house. The Royal Academy's rooms were there. See vol. VI. *Conversations of James Northcote*, note to p. 435.

91. *His life spins round on its soft axle.*

'Or she from west her silent course advance
With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
On her soft axle.'

Paradise Lost, VIII. 165.

Age cannot wither. Antony and Cleopatra, III. 2.

92. *Captain Englefield and his crew.* 'Captain Englefield and his crew escaping from the wreck of the Centaur' was Northcote's first 'historical' picture.

Sir J. Jeffreys . . . armour. Sir James Jeffreys (1757-1834), who received the gold medal for the best historical picture in 1784, viz. 'Defence of the Spanish Batteries before Gibraltar' was engraved by Woollett.

93. *His story of Lavinia. The Decameron*, Fourth Day, Fifth Novel.

West (as an President of the Royal Academy). Benjamin West, who was elected P.R.A. on the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1792. He died in 1820.

94. *Other wars in Flanders. 1 King Henry IV.*, III. 2.

95. *Loutherbourg.* Philip James Loutherbourg (1740-1812), an escape painter.

Blake. William Blake, poet and artist (1757-1827).

Sharp. William Sharp, engraver (1749-1824). He was a follower of Messrs. Sweebach and Francis Seymour.

Fuseli. John Henry Fuseli, R.A., painter (1741-1825).

96. *Mortimer.* Cavaliere Cipriani, a painter of Florentine birth and one of the original members of the Royal Academy (1727-1785).

Shakespeare upon the square. Hamlet, V. 2.

97. *Prince of wars in the German [enemy]. 2 King Henry IV.*, III. 2.

Defy augury. Hamlet, V. 2.

ESSAY X. ON ENVY (A DIALOGUE)

Turner. David Turner, the surgeon (1775-1858). See vol. VIII. *Conversations on Reynolds' Discourses*, pp. 170 and 181 and 182.

Wilkie. Sir David Wilkie (1785-1841).

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98. *Hoppner.* John Hoppner (1759-1810), portrait and landscape painter, who excelled in portraits of women and children.
——. Mr. W. C. Hazlitt suggests that Godwin is meant.

99. *Turner.* J. M. W. Turner, the greatest English landscape painter (1775-1851).
The wisest, meanest of mankind. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. IV. 281, applied to Bacon.
*W***.* Wellington.

100. *Lord Castlereagh.* See *ante*, note to p. 13.
To throw a cruel sunshine on a fool. Armstrong, *The Art of Preserving Health*, Book IV.
The Miss Hornecks. See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 93.
Mr. C——. Croker.

101. Note. Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), the dramatist, described by Goldsmith as 'the Terence of England.'

102. *Incredulus odi.* Horace, *De Arte Poet.*, 188.

103. *Acis and Galatea.* A serenata by John Gay (1688-1732), produced at the Haymarket with Handel's music, 1732. See the 1st chorus in part II.

104. *Mr. Croley.* George Croly (1780-1860), author of the romance of *Salathiel* (1829), and numerous other works.

105. *The Royal Society of Authors.* Probably the Royal Society for the advancement of General Literature, founded 1823. Croly was on the council.
Sir Andrew Wylie. John Galt's (1779-1839) novel, *Sir Andrew Wylie of that Ilk*, was published in 1822.

107. *Galled his kibe. Hamlet*, V. 1.
Sir Peter Lely. Pieter Van der Faes (1618-1680), whose father changed the family name to Lely; painter (of Westphalian birth) of the Beauties of the Court of Charles II.

ESSAY XI. ON SITTING FOR ONE'S PICTURE

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 35, Vol. VIII., 1823, 'Table Talk, IX.'

107. *The beggar in the street.* The Author himself painted a small portrait in oils of a poor old woman whom he met near Manchester in 1803. [W. C. H.]

108. *When he sat to me.* In 1804, when the sitter was in his 67th year, and Unitarian Minister at Wem in Shropshire . . . The picture is still in a fair state of preservation. [W. C. H.]

109. *The late Mr. Opie.* John Opie (1761-1807), historical painter.
Invisible or dimly seen. Paradise Lost, V. 157.

111. *The Bunburys.* See vol. VI. *Mr. Northcote's Conversations*, note to p. 454.
Happy alchemy of mind. Cf. vol. V. *Lectures on the English Poets*, note to p. 107.
Vandyke married a daughter of Earl Gower. He married, about 1639, Maria Ruthven, grand-daughter of the first Earl of Gowrie. See *Conversations of James Northcote, R.A., with James Ward*, p. 92, where Northcote is reported as wroth with Hazlitt for having given the Earl's name as Cowper. The change from Cowper to Gower, as given in the present text, is because of an erratum-direction to that effect behind the 'Contents of the First Volume,' in the original edition.
A painter of the name of Astley . . . Lady ——. John Astley, portrait-painter (?1730-1787), married Lady Daniell. See Redgrave's Dictionary.

112. *Had Petrarch gained his Laura, etc.*

> 'Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
> He would have written sonnets all his life?'
>
> *Don Juan*, Canto III. Stanza 8.

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112. *St. Preux.* In Rousseau's *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760).

113. *Till the sense aches at it. Othello*, IV. 2.

Amorous toys of light-winged Cupid.

'Light-wing'd toys of feather'd Cupid.'

Othello, I. 3.

Canova. Antonio Canova (1757-1822), Venetian sculptor.

114. *The world forgetting.* Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, 208.

Or stock-dove plain amid the forest deep. Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, I. 4.

Think of its crimes. Thomson, *An Hymn on Solitude.*

115. *Lord Keppel.* Augustus Viscount Keppel (1725-1786), one of the English Admirals. He and his second in command, Sir Hugh Palliser, were court-martialled for permitting the French fleet to escape after an indecisive battle off Ushant, 27th July 1778. Both were acquitted.

Mr. C——r . . . made the House stare. See *Hansard*, N. S., IX., 1211, June 25, 1823, for Croker's remarks.

116. *To lie like Whitfield.* Whitfield was buried in 1770. When the coffin was opened in 1784, the body was found to be perfect. See L. Tyerman's *Life*, II. 602-3. Possibly it is to this that Hazlitt refers.

Warm, kneaded motion to a clog.

This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod.

Measure for Measure, III. 1.

ESSAY XII. WHETHER GENIUS IS CONSCIOUS OF ITS POWERS

117. *Bolingbroke.* Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1672-1751), statesman, writer and friend of Pope.

Sir William Temple. Diplomatist and essayist (1628-1700).

Sees not itself. Julius Cæsar, I. 2.

A phœnix gazed by all. Paradise Lost, V. 272.

118. *Materiam superabat opus.* Ovid, *Met.*, II. 5.

Our poesy is a gum which issues [oozes]. *Timon of Athens*, I. 1.

119. *Invita Minervâ.* See *ante*, note to p. 8.

120. *The glory, the intuition, the amenity.* Lamb's 'Lines on the Celebrated Picture by Lionardo da Vinci, called "The Virgin of the Rocks."'

Through happiness or pains. Pope's *Epistle to Mr. Jervas*, l. 68.

I write this at Winterslow. See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 90.

My mind to me a kingdom is. From Sir Edward Dyer's lyric in Byrd's *Psalms and Sonnets* (1588).

That character of Millimant. See vol. VIII. *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, pp. 73-4.

Signior Orlando Friscobaldo. In Dekker's *The Honest Whore*, Part II. See vol. V. *Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, pp. 335, *et seq.*

122. *Webster or Decker.* John Webster (? d. 1625) and Thomas Dekker (c. 1570-c. 1637). See vol. V. *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.*

Schlegel. In his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.* See vol. I. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, note to p. 171.

The Descent of Liberty. Leigh Hunt's Mask, with a dedication from Surrey Jail was published in 1815.

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122. *When the mighty fell.* Napoleon.

123. *Cried out upon in the top of the compass.* Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2.

'You would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass.'

and II. 2.

'An eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question.'

Mr. Jerdan recommends the volume of Characteristics. See vol. III. of the present edition for Hazlitt's *Characteristics*, and particulars of their publication. The book was favourably reviewed in the *Literary Gazette* for July 12, 1823.

The Story of Rimini. Published in 1816, and savagely reviewed in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1818.

An Adonis of fifty. See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 358.

Return, Alpheus. Lycidas, 132-3.

Look abroad into universality. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Book I.

124. *A. P. E.* Alexander Pope, Esquire.

They take in vain. Exodus, XX. 7.

It is all one as we should love. All's Well that Ends Well, I. 1.

125. *Fast-anchored in the deep abyss of time* [space]. Cowper, *Retirement*, l. 84.

The face of heaven so bright. See *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2, 20-2.

Bartlemy-Fair. A famous fair was held at West Smithfield, 1133-1855 about the time of the festival of St. Bartholomew, August 24.

The high endeavour and the glad success. Cowper, *The Task*, V. 901.

126. *Bis repetita crambe.* 'Occidit miseros crambe repetita magistros,' Juvenal, VII. 154.

Annibal Caracci. Annibale Caracci (1560-1609), painter of the Farnese Gallery, in Rome.

127. '*Love for Love.*' Congreve's comedy, 1695.

Miss Mellon. Harriet Mellon (1775-1837), later, Duchess of St. Alban's. She began on the stage as a child in boys' parts, was introduced by Sheridan to London, where she played 'Lydia Languish' in *The Rivals*, at Drury Lane, January 1795, and became a popular hoyden. Mr. Coutts, the banker, fell in love with her, and married her soon after the death of his wife in 1814, and when he died in 1822 his wealth passed to her. In 1827 she married William, Duke of St. Alban's, whose age was 27. After providing handsomely for him, she left the bulk of her property to Mr. Coutts' granddaughter, Miss Angela Burdett.

Bob Palmer. (1757-?1805.)

Bannister. John Bannister (1760-1836).

ESSAY XIII. ON THE PLEASURE OF HATING

Lines to a Spider. Probably those in *The Liberal* (Byron, Shelley and Hunt's Quarterly), vol. II. 177.

128. *The milk of human kindness. Macbeth*, I. 5.

As Mr. Burke observes. Sublime and Beautiful, Part I. § 15.

Last line but one, *matter*, ? a slip for 'nature.'

129. *We subscribe to new editions of Fox's Book of Martyrs.* A folio edition was published by subscription by Thomas Kelly, London, 1811.

Off, you lendings! Lear, III. 4.

Panopticons. Jeremy Bentham's name for his method of prison supervision. See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 197.



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129. *Mr. Owen's impassable Parallelogram.* Cf. vol. III. *Political Essays*, pp. 121-7.
Mr. Irving . . . Caledonian Chapel. See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 222, *et seq.*
'Tis pretty, though a plague. All 's Well that Ends Well, I. 1.
Upon this bank and shoal of time. Macbeth, I. 7.

130. *Outdo* [o'er doing] *termagant. Hamlet*, III. 2.
A most. ? A misprint for 'almost.'
That which was luscious as locusts. Othello, I. 3.

131. *Epistle to Robert Southey, Esq.* See the Letter of Elia to Robert Southey, Esq., in *The London Magazine*, Oct. 1823.
That I myself have celebrated. See *ante*, the Essay 'On the Conversation of Authors.'

132. *H——* ? Joseph Hume of the Pipe Office, not the Radical M.P. (See Lamb's *Letters*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, I. 361, note 1).
Carve them as a dish fit for the Gods. Julius Cæsar, II. 1.
L—— H—— Leigh Hunt.
John Scott. ? John Scott (1783-1821), Editor of *The London Magazine*, who died from a wound received in a duel from Christie, Lockhart's friend.
Mrs. —— Montagu.
B—— ? Burney.
Sans intermission, for hours by the dial. As You Like It, II. 7.
Fellows of no mark. 1 King Henry IV., III. 2.
——'s ? Hume.

133. *Mr. Washington Irvine a very fine writer.* Cf. vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age.*
Mr. Liston. John Liston (1776-1846).

134. *Gone into the wastes of time.* 'But thou among the wastes of time must go.' Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, XII.
Mr. Moore's Loves of the Angels. Of Mr. Moore's poem, published on Jan. 1, 1823, five editions were exhausted in one year.
Sitting in my window. Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, V. 5.
[Heaved from a sheepcote].
The wine of poetry is drank.

> 'The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
> Is left this vault to brag of.'
>
> *Macbeth*, II. 3.

135. *Play* [sport] *with Amaryllis in the shade. Lycidas*, 68.
Fonthill. The residence of 'Vathek' Beckford.
To every good work reprobate. Epistle to Titus, I. 16.

136. *Of whom the world was not worthy. Epistle to the Hebrews*, XI. 38.
This was some time a mystery. 'This was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.' *Hamlet*, III. 1.
The rose plucked from the forehead of a virtuous love.

> 'Takes off the rose
> From the fair forehead of an innocent love
> And sets a blister there.'
>
> *Hamlet*, III. 4.

137. Note. *The Sentinel.* See vol. VI. *Conversations of James Northcote*, p. 518, and footnote.
Daddy Ratton. In Scott's *Heart of Midlothian.*

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ESSAY XIV. ON DR. SPURZHEIM'S THEORY

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137. *Drs. Gall and Spurzheim.* See *ante*, Essay *On Dreams*.

138. *A book where men may read strange matters. Macbeth*, I. 5.
Draws the curtain. Twelfth Night, I. 5.

139. *Whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. Othello.* I. 3.

140. *Here be truths . . . dashed and brewed with lies.* Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 114. Cf. also a similar passage in Addison (*The Spectator*, 580).
With other matters of like pith and moment. Cf. 'enterprizes of great pith and moment.' *Hamlet*, III. 1.
If these things are done in the green tree. S. Luke, xxiii. 31.

141. *The Alchemist.* By Ben Jonson, 1610.

144. *Malebranche.* Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715), whose *De la Recherche de la Vérité* was published in 1674.

146. *Gaubius Gobbo.* 'Good Launcelot Gobbo,' *Merchant of Venice*, II. 2.

147. *There needs no ghost to tell us that. Hamlet*, I. 5.

149. *The Wonderful Magazine. The Wonderful Magazine, or Marvellous Chronicle, or New Weekly Entertainer*, a journal of the latter half of the eighteenth century, with varying titles.
King Ferdinand. Possibly the reference is to the Cortes having let Ferdinand leave Cadiz (whither they had carried him) during the siege by the French on Oct. 1, 1813, in order to make terms with the French.

153. *It follows, as the night the day. Hamlet*, I. 3.

155. *So as with a difference. Hamlet*, IV. 5.

156. Note. *Dr. Combe of Edinburgh.* The phrenological Combes were George (1788-1858), W.S. and moral philosopher, and his brother, Andrew (1797-1847), doctor of medicine.
Fancy in himself. 'I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men.' 2 *King Henry IV.*, I. 2.

157. Note. *Squandering glances. As You Like It*, II. 7.

ESSAY XV. ON EGOTISM

158. *King Cambyses' vein.* 1 *King Henry IV.*, II. 4.
Vain and self-conceit. 'Self and vain conceit,' *King Richard II.*, III. 2.
Getting the start of the majestic world. Julius Cæsar, I. 2.

160. *Mr.* —— Mill. See *post*, note to p. 183.
The present Lord Chancellor. John Scott, Lord Eldon (1751-1838), who had no love for literature or art.
Madame Catalani. Angelica Catalani (1779-1849) the popular Italian singer. She made £10,000 in four months in London.

161. *The late Chancellor (Erskine).* Thomas Erskine, 1750-1823.

162. *Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.* Juvenal, VIII. 83.

163. *Wisdom is justified of her children. S. Matthew*, xi. 19.
Throw our bread upon the waters. Eccles., xi. 1.
When Goldsmith was talking one day. See Boswell's *Johnson* (ed. G. B. Hill), II. 231.
Hervey's Meditations. The Rev. James Hervey's (1714-1758) *Meditations and Contemplations* were highly esteemed in their day.

164. *Westall.* Richard Westall (1765-1836).
Angelica Kauffman. Maria Anna Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), a Swiss painter of (chiefly) female characters, many of which were engraved by Bartolozzi.

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165. *Arkwright.* Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-1792).

166. *A cell of ignorance. Cymbeline*, III. 3.
The only great man in modern times. Napoleon, of course. He died on May 5, 1821, of cancer in the stomach.
Mandeville. Bernard Mandeville (1670?-1733) author of *The Fable of the Bees* (1714).

167. *Forget the things that are behind. Philippians*, iii. 13.

168. *Nothing is but what is not. Macbeth*, I. 3.
Goldsmith was ever jealous of beauty in the other sex. See *ante*, p. 100.
Through listening [wond'ring] *senates.* Pope's *Moral Essays*, I. 184-5.

ESSAY XVI. HOT AND COLD

169. *Hot, cold, moist, and dry. Paradise Lost*, II. 598.
Neat-handed Phyllises. L'Allegro, 86.
Native and endued into that element. Hamlet, IV. 7.

172. *Whose name signifies love.*

> 'It is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.'
> *Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. 1.

To be supped upon. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. III. 18.

> '*King.* At supper! where?
> *Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten.'

173. *Here all is conscience.* Chaucer, *Prologue*, 150.
The quills upon the fretful porcupine. Hamlet, I. 5.
So drossy and divisible are they. Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, I. 319.
Voltaire's traveller. See *Histoire des Voyages de Scarmentado.*

174. Note. *Mr. Scarlett.* Probably James Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, who practised in the Northern Circuit and Lancashire Sessions till 1807. Hazlitt received a complimentary letter from Scarlett on the publication of *Principles of Human Action.* (See *Four Generations of a Literary Family*, I. 92-3, and *Memoirs*, I. 112, and *post*, note to *Principles of Human Action*).
Sterne asks why a sword. Tristram Shandy, Bk. IX. chap. 33.
Note. *Mr. Shepherd.* See *ante*, note to p. 61.

175. *The sovereign'st thing on earth.* 1 *King Henry IV.*, I. 3.
Makes the odds all even. Measure for Measure, III. 1.
Hacquet's Travels in Carpathia. Balthasar Hacquet's (1740-1815) book was published in 1790-6 at Nürnberg.

176. *Dull, cold winter does inhabit here.* 'But dead-cold winter must inhabit here.' *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act II. 1.
Long purples. Hamlet, IV. 7.
Take the good the Gods provide them. Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 105.
Appliances and means to boot. 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 1.
'*A man*,' *says Yorick*, '*finds an apple.*' *Tristram Shandy*, III. 34.

ESSAY XVII. THE NEW SCHOOL OF REFORM

180. *Good haters.* Mrs. Piozzi, in her *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson* (*Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ed. G. B. Hill, I. 204), writes: 'Dear Bathurst (said he to me one day) was a man to my very heart's content: he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a *Whig*; he was a very good *hater*.' See also vol. I. *The Round Table*, p. 103.

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181. *Right-hand defections.* Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*, vol. I. chap. XII.
A consummation. 'Devoutly to be wished.' *Hamlet*, III. 1.
What more felicity can fall to creature? Spenser's *Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterflie*, 27.

183. *Good œillades.* Cf. *Merry Wives*, I. 3, 'judicious œillades,' and *King Lear*, IV. 5, 'strange œillades.'
Mr. Hobhouse. John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869), Byron's friend.
One of them has a place at the India House. James Mill (1773-1836), who, in spite of his radical opinions, was appointed Assistant-Examiner of Indian Correspondence in 1819.
Their attacks on the Edinburgh Review. The Westminster Review, financed by Bentham and edited by Bowring, was founded in January 1824. Its first numbers contained a series of assaults on the *Edinburgh* (Cf. *post*, p. 381); *Redgauntlet* was damned in the third number (July 1824, vol. II. p. 179); and the article on Moore's *Life of Sheridan* appeared in the number for October, 1825, vol. IV. pp. 371-407. The allusion to Sheridan as an unsuccessful adventurer will be found on p. 404.

184. *A discipline of humanity.* Bacon's Essays, *Of Marriage and Civil Life.*
The treatment of Mr. Buckingham. James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855) established at Calcutta in 1818 a paper called *The Calcutta Journal*, which censured the abuses of the Indian Government, and was suppressed by John Adams, temporary Governor-General, in April, 1823.
Mr. Hall. Robert Hall, the celebrated Baptist preacher (1764-1831). His removal from Leicester, where he had served as pastor of the Baptist congregation for twenty years, to Bristol, took place in 1826, when he succeeded Dr. Ryland as head of the Baptist College at Bristol and pastor of Broadmead Chapel.

185. *Sir Richard Blackmore.* Court physician to William and Anne. He died in 1729, after having written six epics in sixty books.

186. *Sir Robert Peel . . . calico printing.* 1750-1830. He carried on a cotton factory at Bury with great success, and devoted much time to the improvement of machinery.
Elements of Political Economy, by James Mill. James Mill's work was published in 1821.
Principles of Political Economy. By John Ramsay M'Culloch (1789-1864). Published 1820.
Strange! that such difference there should be. John Byrom, *On the Feuds between Handel and Bononcini.*
Mr. M——. ? James Mill (1773-1836).
Mr. P. Is Thomas Love Peacock is meant? He was the author of *Rhododaphne* (1818), the poem possibly referred to as *Rhodope* in Hazlitt's note to p. 187. Peacock attacked poetry in his *Four Ages of Poetry*, contributed to Ollier's *Literary Pocket Book* in 1820, and was answered by Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry*. Though Peacock has not been associated with Utilitarianism, yet his place at the India-House, where he was a fellow-clerk of James Mill's, may have lent colour to the assumption that he was 'one of them.'
Mr. Pl——. Francis Place, radical reformer (1771-1854).
The Last Man. Thomas Campbell's poem *The Last Man* was printed in the *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 8, No. 33, 1823. Perhaps Hazlitt had its title in mind.

188. *Thereafter as it happens.* 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2. 'Thereafter as they be.'
Primrose paths. Hamlet, I. 3.

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The Hypocrite. Bickerstaff's comedy (1768), based, through *The Nonjuror* (1717), on Molière's *Tartuffe* (1664).

192. *Swear, with Lord Peter. The Tale of a Tub*, Section IV.
Its quality is not strained. Merchant of Venice, IV. 1.

193. *Dignum (the singer).* Charles Dignum (1765?-1827), of Drury Lane.
Suett. Richard Suett (d. 1805), a comic actor, very popular at Drury Lane.
'No Song, No Supper.' A musical entertainment of Hoare's (1790), with music by Storace. See a letter from Hazlitt to his father (*Memoirs*, I. 17-18), from which it appears that it was at Liverpool in 1790 (not 1792) that he saw this piece.
The false Fiarimel. The Faerie Queen, Bk. III. canto 8.
The grinding laws of necessity. The reference here and elsewhere is to Malthus. See vol. IV. *A Reply to Malthus* and *The Spirit of the Age.*

194. *Opens all the cells where memory slept.* Cowper, *The Task*, VI. 11-12.
Who enters there. Dante's *Inferno*, III. 1. 9.

ESSAY XVIII. ON THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO SUCCESS IN LIFE

From *The London Magazine*, vol. I., June 1820, 'Table Talk, I.'

195. *The race is not to the swift. Eccles.* IX. 11.
A Minister of State. Probably Castlereagh, who led the House of Commons until, upon his father's death in April 1821, he became Lord Londonderry.

196. *Aspiring to be Gods.* Pope's *Essay on Man*, I. 127-8.
Appliances and means to boot. 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 1.
Some trick not worth an egg. Coriolanus, IV. 4.
There's but the twinkling of a star. Butler's *Hudibras*, Part II. Canto III. 956.

197. *Constrained by mastery.* Cf. Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, VI.
'That Love will not submit to be controlled
By mastery.'

198. *George Psalmanazar.* The literary impostor (1679-1763). He was a native of France and pretended to be a Formosan. To keep up the imposition he invented an alphabet and a Formosan grammar.
Enquiry concerning Political Justice. Godwin's book (1793).
Diversions of Purley. John Horne Tooke's book was published in 1786-1805. See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 231.
Interminable babble. 'Intarissable babil' in the *Magazine.*
Tongue with a garnish of brains. Goldsmith, *Retaliation*, 6.
Wimbledon. Where Horne Tooke lived.
With a nostrum in his mouth. See Alexander Stephens's *Memoirs of John Horne Tooke, Esq.*, vol. II. p. 445, 'While yet in perfect possession of his senses, and uncertain of his impending fate, although conscious it could not be long protracted, the patient eagerly inquired' [of Sir Francis Burdett] 'concerning the effect produced on the House of Commons by the motion relative to the *punishment* of soldiers? . . .
'As he had once more been relieved by cordials, notwithstanding he was told it was now in vain, the member for Westminster prepared to administer one with his own hand. Having knelt for this purpose, the dying man opened his eyes for the last time, and seeing who it was that presented the potion, he swallowed it with avidity.'
The late Professor Porson. Richard Porson (1759-1808), Greek scholar and critic.

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198. *The Member for Old Sarum.* See *ante*, note to p. 6.
The man of perhaps the greatest ability now living. Coleridge. Cf. *The Spirit of the Age.*

199. *Duns Scotus to Jacob Behmen.* John Duns, the 'subtle doctor'; Jacob Bœhmen (1575-1624), German mystic.
Discoursed in eloquent music. *Hamlet*, III. 2.
Ten thousand great ideas. Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, I. lix.
Non ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius. Erasmus, *Adagiorum Chiliades*, 'Munus aptum.'
Though he had all knowledge. 1 *Corinthians*, xiii. 1, 2.

200. *You cannot gather grapes of thorns.* *S. Matthew*, vii. 16.
Respice finem. See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 27.
To get the start of the majestic world. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2.

201. *Mens divinior.* Horace, *Sat.* I. IV. 43.

202. *Vox faucibus haesit.* Vergil, *Æneid*, II. 774.
With a confident brow. 2 *King Henry IV.*, II. 1.
Too deep for his hearers. Goldsmith's *Retaliation*, 35.
A soul as fair. Thomson, *Castle of Indolence*, II. 33.
Fell flat, and shamed their worshippers. *Paradise Lost*, I. 461.
How he cuts up in the caul. Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, V. 145).

203. *Sterne's description of Mr. Hammond Shandy.* *Tristram Shandy*, III. 10.
On that point. The *Magazine* adds 'Petulant set his mark.' Congreve, *The Way of the World*, V. 3.
For women, born to be controll'd. Waller: *Of Love*, 13-16:

> 'For women (born to be control'd)
> Stoop to the forward and the bold:
> Affect the haughty and the proud,
> The gay, the frolic, and the loud.'

Scrub in the farce. In Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem.*

204. *Doubtless, the pleasure is as great.* Butler's *Hudibras*, Part II. Canto III. 1.
The art of being well deceived. See vol. I. *The Round Table*, p. 84.
A writer whom I know very well. Himself.
Sup at the Shakespeare. The noted theatrical tavern in the Piazza, Covent Garden. See Timbs' *History of Clubs and Club-Life in London*, ed. 1886, p. 427.

205. *His next answer to Vetus.* See vol. III. *Political Essays*, p. 57 and note.
The graceful ornaments, etc. Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 164).
'*Don't you remember,*' *says Gray.* Letter to Richard West, May 27, 1742.
A man of genius a coxcomb in dress. Cf. vol. I. *The Round Table*, p. 95.
Prince Prettyman. In the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* (1671).

206. *Nihil humani.* Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*, I. 1.
The flattery that soothes the dull cold ear of death. Gray's *Elegy*, 11.

207. *Lady Mary Wortley Montague.* (c. 1690-1762), the correspondent of Pope and Addison.
A. P. E. Alexander Pope, Esquire.
Ere we have shuffled off that mortal coil. *Hamlet*, III. 1.
The real story of David Ritchie. David Ritchie, a dwarf, of Manor, Peeblesshire, was the original of Elshender, the Black Dwarf, in Scott's novel so called. See *The Life and Anecdotes of the Black Dwarf, or David Ritchie, commonly called Bowed Davie*, by William Chambers, Edinburgh, 1820.

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207. Note. *Sir John Suckling*, 1609-42. The two lines quoted are part of *The Session of the Poets* (20).

So Mr. Gifford dedicated these verses to Mr. Hoppner. Hoppner became R.A. in 1795, and Gifford dedicated the Second Edition of his *Baviad and Maeviad* to him in 1797.

208. *Quite chop-fallen. Hamlet*, v. 1.

Such a poor [bare] *forked animal. King Lear*, III. 4.

They did it for his good. See No. XXXVII. of the Quarterly Review, April 1818, published in September.

209. *These are the doctrines, etc.*

'These are the volumes that enrich the shops,
These pass with admiration through the world,
And bring their author an immortal name.'
Roscommon, *Horace's Art of Poetry*, 385-7.

Embalms and spices. Timon of Athens, IV. 3.

The spital and the lazar-house. 'The spital-house and ulcerous sores would cast the gorge at.' *Timon of Athens*, IV. 3.

ESSAY XIX. ON THE LOOK OF A GENTLEMAN

From *The London Magazine*, vol. III. Jan. 1821, 'Table Talk VI.,' signed T.

Causa latet, res ipsa [*vis est*] *notissima.* Ovid. *Met.* IV. 287.

210. *Familiarity of regard.* 'Quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard of control.' *Twelfth Night*, II. 5.

Nice conduct.

'Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.'
Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, IV. 122.

'*The Clandestine Marriage.*' By Colman the Elder and Garrick (1766). This comedy is about to be revived at the Haymarket Theatre (March 17, 1903).

Wound up for the day. The Clandestine Marriage, Act II. Scene 1.

Sir Joseph Banks. The celebrated naturalist (1743-1820). He accompanied Cook in his first circumnavigation of the world.

211. *Sir Charles B—nb—ry.* See vol. VI. *Mr. Northcote's Conversations*, note to p. 454.

Lady Sarah L—nn—x. Ibid.

How tall his person is. Hudibras, Part I. Canto iii., 83-4.

The old one-eyed Duke of Queensberry. William Douglas, 3rd Earl of March and 4th Duke of Queensberry (1724-1810).

The late Admiral Byron. The Hon. John Byron, the poet's grandfather (1723-1768).

N——. Northcote.

Subdued to the very quality. Othello, I. 3.

212. *Dress makes the man.* 'Worth makes the man,' etc. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. IV. 203.

Wycherley. William Wycherley (1640-1715). He was a man of fashion as well as a writer of comedies.

Lord Hinchinbroke. Sir Edward Mont- (or Mount-) agu, first Viscount Hinchinbroke and first Earl of Sandwich (1625-1672).

Note. *The Duchess of Cleveland.* 'Her graceless grace' of the Court of Charles II.

213. *Alcibiades threw away a flute.* See Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades.*

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213. *Ferdinand in the Tempest.* Act III. 1.

214. *Sergeant Atkinson.* In Fielding's *Amelia*, Book v. chap. 2.
Lord C——. Castlereagh.
Hatching vain empires. *Paradise Lost*, II. 378.
Voluminous and vast. *Paradise Lost*, II. 652.

215. *Marquis Wellesley.* Richard Cowley, Marquis Wellesley (1760-1842). Governor-General of India. He was made a Knight of the Garter and Foreign Minister on his return from Madrid whither he went as Ambassador in 1809.
Stores of ladies. Milton's *L'Allegro*, 120.
Lord Erskine. Thomas Erskine (1750-1823), Advocate and Lord Chancellor.
Lord Stanhope. Charles, Earl Stanhope (1753-1816). He was a strenuous supporter of republican ideals and a man of many inventions.
The Orson of debate. The bear-suckled hero of the fifteenth century romance, *Valentine and Orson*, otherwise the *Wild Man of France.*
A Satyr that comes staring from the woods. Earl of Roscommon, translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, 281-2. Cf. *Ars Poetica*, 244, *et seq.*
Lord Eldon. See *ante*, note to p. 158.

216. *Gave him good œillades.* See *ante*, note to p. 183.
Foote's Farce of Taste. 1752.

218. *All tranquillity and smiles.* Cowper, *The Task*, IV. 49.

219. *Of mimic statesmen.* Pope, *Moral Essays*, iii. 309-10.
God Almighty's gentleman. Dryden's *Absolom and Achitophel*, Part I. 645.
G—— D——. George Dyer (1755-1841), miscellaneous writer. See Lamb's *Amicus Redivivus*, *Elia*, ed. Ainger, p. 281.

ESSAY XX. ON READING OLD BOOKS

From *The London Magazine*, Feb. 1821, vol. III. p. 128, 'Table Talk, VII.,' signed T.

220. *Lady Morgan.* (1783?-1859) A writer of Irish stories and of other miscellaneous work in the early years of the nineteenth century. Before her marriage in 1811 her works bore her maiden name, Sydney Owenson. Her story, *The Wild Irish Girl*, a national tale, published in 1806, passed through seven editions in two years.
Anastasius. Thomas Hope's (1770-1831) Eastern romance published 1819, and warmly praised by the *Edinburgh Review.*
Delphine. Madame de Staël's novel was published in 1802.
In their newest gloss. *Macbeth*, I. 7.
Andrew Millar. Thomson's and Fielding's publisher (1707-1768). 'I respect Millar, sir,' said Dr. Johnson; 'he has raised the price of literature' (Boswell's *Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, I. 287). He was succeeded by his partner, Thomas Cadell the elder.
Thurloe's State Papers. *A Collection of State Papers* (seven vols. folio, 1742) by John Thurloe (1616-1668). He was Secretary of State during the Protectorate.
Sir William Temple's Essays. Published as *Miscellanea* in 1680 and 1692. He was the first writer, says Dr. Johnson, who gave cadence to English prose.

221. *For thoughts and for remembrance.* *Hamlet*, IV. 5.
Bruscambille. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Book III. chap. 35.
The Memoirs of Lady Vane. In *Peregrine Pickle.*
The adventures at the masquerade. *Tom Jones*, Book XIII. chap. 7.

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xxx. [illegible]

xxx. [illegible]

xxx. [illegible]

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that the love scene between Jack Bannister as Tattle and Mrs. Jordan as Miss Prue was 'probably never surpassed in rich natural comedy.'

226. *Know my cue.*

'Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter.'

Othello, I. 2.

Intus et in cute. See *ante*, note to p. 24.

The celebrated Sir Humphrey Davy. Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829), natural philosopher.

227. *The divine Clementina.* In Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753).

With every trick and line. 'line and trick.' *All's Well that Ends Well*, I. 1.

Graven [draw . . .] *in my heart's table. Ibid.*

Mackenzie. Henry Mackenzie's (1745-1831) *Julia de Roubigné* was published in 1777, six years after the *Man of Feeling*.

Miss ——. Probably the lady of *Liber Amoris*.

That ligament, fine as it was. Tristram Shandy, Book VI. chap. 10 (The Story of Le Fever).

His story of the Hawk. Boccaccio's *Decameron*, 5th day, 9th story. See vol. v. *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, note to p. 347.

Farquhar . . . Recruiting Officer. 1706.

At one proud [fell] *swoop. Macbeth*, IV. 3.

Embalmed with odours. Paradise Lost, II. 843.

His form had not yet lost. Ibid. I. 591.

228. *Falls flat upon the grunsel edge. Ibid.* I. 460.

He, like an eagle. Coriolanus, V. 6.

An Essay on Marriage. No such essay by Wordsworth is at present known to exist. It would seem either that 'Marriage' is a misprint for some other word, or that Hazlitt was mistaken in the subject of the essay referred to by Coleridge. Hazlitt is probably recalling a conversation with Coleridge in Shropshire at the beginning of 1798 (cf. 'My First Acquaintance with Poets'), at which time *A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (1793) was the only notable prose work which Wordsworth had published.

Note. *Is this the present Earl?* James Maitland, eighth Earl of Lauderdale (1759-1839), succeeded his father in August 1789.

229. *Worthy of all acceptation.* 1 *Timothy*, i. 15.

Clarendon's History of the Grand Rebellion. 1704-7.

Hollingshed. Ralph Holinshed's *Chronicles of Englande, Scotlande, and Irelande*, 1577, and later issues.

Stowe. John Stow's (1525?-1605) *Englysh Chronicles*, 1561, and later issues, and *A Survay of London*, 1598, and later issues.

Fuller's Worthies. Thomas Fuller's (1608-1661) *The History of the Worthies of England*, 1662.

'*A Wife for a Month.*' 1623.

'*Thierry and Theodoret.*' 1621.

Guicciardini. Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), author of a History of Italy from 1494 to 1532.

The Loves of Persiles and Sigismunda. Cervantes' last work, the dedication of which was written four days before his death. A translation from the French was printed in London in 1619, and from the Spanish in 1854.

Galatea. Cervantes' first work, a pastoral romance, printed at Alcala in 1585.

Another Yarrow. Wordsworth's *Yarrow Unvisited*.

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ESSAY XXI. ON PERSONAL CHARACTER

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From *The London Magazine*, March 1821, vol. III. p. 291, 'Table Talk, VIII.,' signed T.

As the flesh and fortune shall serve. *Measure for Measure*, II. 1.
And feels the ruling passion. Pope's *Moral Essays*, Ep. I. 262.
Mr. Nicholson. William Nicholson (1753-1815). He is often referred to in Hazlitt's *Life of Holcroft*. See vol. II. p. 91, etc.
Hot, cold, moist, and dry. See *ante*, note to p. 169.
It is not in our stars. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 'That we are underlings.'
231. *To beguile the time.* *Macbeth*, I. 5.
The child's the father of the man. Wordsworth's '*My heart leaps up.*'
232. *Fairfax and the starry Vere.* Marvell's 'Appleton House.'
He saw the Chief-Justice Jeffries. See *Evelyn's Diary* (ed. Bray, 1859), vol. II., p. 199.
233. *An old hair-brained uncle.* Loftus, brother of Mrs. Hazlitt, wife of the Rev. W. Hazlitt.
Mark or likelihood. 1 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2.
Instinct, Hal, instinct. A misquotation from 1 *King Henry IV.*, II. 4.
Beneath the hills. Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Book VI. ['Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills.']
234. *Like that ensanguined* [sanguine] *flower.* *Lycidas*, 106.
As the flies of a summer. Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, Ed. Payne, II. 112).
Most women have no character [characters]. Pope's *Moral Essay*, Ep. II. 2.
Mary Wolstonecraft. See *ante*, note to p. 41.
Not to speak it profanely. *Hamlet*, III. 2.
235. *Fideliter didicisse.* Ovid, *Ex Ponto Epist.*, Lib. II. Ep. 9, 47.
237. *Fiery quality.* *King Lear*, II. 4.
The shot of accident. *Othello*, IV. 1.
Quip, or crank. Milton's *L'Allegro*, 27.
238. *Have his nothings monstered.* *Coriolanus*, II. 2.
Teres et rotundus. 'Fortis, et in se ipso totus, teres atque rotundus.' Horace, *Sat.* II. 7, 86.
A friendly man will show himself friendly. *Proverbs*, xviii. 24. 'A man that hath friends must show,' etc.
Richardson. Jonathan Richardson (c. 1665-1745), author and portrait-painter, whose works on painting fired the early enthusiasm of Sir Joshua Reynolds.
239. '*The Honey-Moon.*' Tobin's comedy, 1805.
240. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin?* *Jeremiah*, xiii. 23.
Villainous low. *The Tempest*, IV. 1.
Panopticon. See *ante*, note to p. 129.
241. *The author of the year* 2500. Louis Sébastien Mercier (1740-1814). See Vol. II. *The Life of Thomas Holcroft*, p. 107 and note.
Servum pecus imitatorum. 'O imitatores, servum pecus,' etc. Horace, Ep. I. 19, 19.

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ESSAY XXII. ON PEOPLE OF SENSE

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From *The London Magazine*, April 1821, vol. III. p. 368, 'Table Talk, IX.,' signed T.

242. *Cabbala.* The oral law of the Jews.
The demure, grave-looking. 'The grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers.' Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, v. 142).

243. *Baxter.* Richard Baxter, the Nonconformist Divine (1615-1691). See vol VI. *Mr. Northcote's Conversations*, p. 364.

244. *Torn to tatters, to very rags. Hamlet*, III. 2.
The pillar'd firmament. Comus, 598.
Note. *The Spanish Inquisition.* See vol. III. *Political Essays*, note to p. 33, and vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 156.

246. *Mr. Shelley's Prometheus Unbound.* Published in 1820. Shelley was drowned in 1822 (See footnote).
Gorgons and Hydras. Paradise Lost, II. 628.
With eye severe. As You Like It, II. 7.
When he banished the poets. The Republic, Book X.
Full of wise saws. As You Like It, II. 7.

247. *Chrestomathic School.* See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 190.
Princes' palaces. 'Poor men's cottages, princes' palaces,' *Merchant of Venice*, I. 2.
The tailors at Laputa. Gulliver's Travels, A Voyage to Laputa, chapter 2.

249. *What can we reason.* Pope's *Essay on Man*, I. 18.
When [where] *thieves break through. S. Matthew*, vi. 19.
Dyot-street, Bloomsbury-square. See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, Note to p. 120.
An aerie of children. Hamlet, II. 2.
A Panopticon. See *ante*, note to p. 129.
So work the honey-bees. King Henry V., I. 2.
Shedding [casting] *a dim, religious light. Il Penseroso*, 160.
Their speech bewrayeth them. S. Matthew, xxvi. 73.

250. *Mankind act from calculation.* Bentham's *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. xiv. § 28. See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 196 and note.

251. *So runs* [says] *the bond. Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1.
The author of St. Leon. Godwin's *Tale of the Sixteenth Century* appeared in 1799.
The author of the Political Justice. Godwin.
Norma loquendi. Horace, *De Arte Poet.*, 72.

252. *Astolpho's voyage. Orlando Furioso*, Book XVIII.
Highest [brightest] *Heaven of invention. King Henry V.*, Prologue.

ESSAY XXIII. ON ANTIQUITY

From *The London Magazine*, May 1821, Vol. III. p. 527, 'Table Talk X.,' signed T.

Auld Robin Gray. Believed at first to be a 'relique.' Lady Ann Barnard (1750-1825) acknowledged the authorship to Sir Walter Scott in 1823.

253. *Lively, audible and full of vent.* 'Waking, audible and full of vent.' *Coriolanus*, IV. 5.

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253. *Amadis de Gaul.* A prose romance of knightly adventures of Portuguese origin (Vasco de Lobeira, d. 1403).
The seven Champions of Christendom. By Richard Johnson (1573-1659?). Published 1596-97. It was one of the books of Thomas Holcroft's boyhood.

254. *The dark rearward.* Cf. 'In the dark backward and abysm of time.' *The Tempest*, I. 2.
The wars of old Assaracus. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, II. IX. 56.
Triple bob-majors. A term in church-bell ringing.
Chaos and old night. Paradise Lost, I. 543.
Cimabue, Giotto, and Ghirlandaio. Giovanni Cimabue (1240-c. 1302), the first great artist of the Florentine School; Giotto di Bondone (c. 1266-1336), Cimabue's pupil, one of the greatest of the early Italian painters; and Domenico Curradi, nicknamed Il Ghirlandajo (the garland-maker) (1449-1494).

255. *The Chronicle of Brute.* Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book II. Canto X.
The Ghost of one of the old kings of Ormus. Fulke Greville's *Alaham.*
The Chiron of Achilles. Iliad, XVI. 143, and XIX. 390.
The priest in Homer. Iliad, I. 8, *et seq.*
Why proffer'st thou light. Troilus and Criseyde, Book III. 1461-2.
The Travels of Anacharsis. The Scythian who travelled far and wide in quest of knowledge, in the times of Solon.
Coryate's Crudities. Hastily gobled up in Five Moneths Travells in France, etc. (1611), by Thomas Coryate (?1577-1617).

256. *When we become men.* 1 *Corinthians*, xiii. 11.
The first time of my seeing Mrs. Siddons act. See vol. I. *The Round Table*, note to p. 156; *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, p. 189 and note; and Hazlitt's *Dramatic Essays.*

257. *Mr. Burke's Reflections.* These were published in 1790, not 1791.
Lord John Russell's Letter. See *The Times*, August 5, 1820. It was an appeal to Wilberforce to use his great influence in averting the crisis caused by the appearance of the Queen.

260. *Grim-visaged, comfortless despair.* Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.* See also vol. VI. *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, note to p. 296.

261. *The glory hereafter to be revealed. Romans*, viii. 18.

ESSAY XXIV. ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WRITING AND SPEAKING

From *The London Magazine*, July 1820, Vol. II. p. 22, 'Table Talk II.,' signed T.

262. '*Some minds*,' *etc.* Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book II., XXII. 4.

263. *F*——. Mr. W. C. Hazlitt states this was George Fletcher, who, with his brother Joseph, came up from Nottingham about 1826, and became a contributor to periodical literature.
Wart his caliver. 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2.
Hear him but reason in divinity. King Henry V., I. 1. ['Is still']

264. *Moved the very stones of Rome. Julius Cæsar*, III. 2.
Fraught of aspic's tongues. Othello, III. 3.
Wielded at will the fierce democracy. Paradise Regained, IV. 269.
Roared you in the ears of the groundlings. Cf. 'to split the ears of the groundlings,' *Hamlet*, III. 2; and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. 2.

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264. *Create a soul.* Milton's *Comus*, 561.

265. *Bottom! thou art translated! Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 1.

Windham. William Windham (1750-1810). Secretary of State for War under Pitt, and again after Pitt's death.

Mr. Coleridge's Conciones ad Populum. Two addresses against Pitt, 1795, republished in *Essays on his Own Times.*

Mr. Thelwal's Tribune. The Tribune . . . consisting chiefly of the political lectures of J. Thelwall, taken in shorthand by W. Ramsay, and revised by the lecturer, 3 vols. 1795-6. Thelwall (1764-1834) was a lecturer on elocution as well as a reformer.

The self-same words. Macbeth, I. 3.

Those brave sublunary [translunary] *things.* Drayton, *Elegy to Henry Reynolds, Esq.*

Fire and air. Antony and Cleopatra, v. 2; and *King Henry V.*, III. 7.

Sound and fury. Macbeth, v. 5.

266. *A Commonplace, etc.* Cf. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 103).

With good emphasis and discretion. Cf. 'with good accent and good discretion,' *Hamlet*, II. 2.

By most admired disorder. Macbeth, III. 4.

Lay the flattering unction. Hamlet, III. 4.

Hear a cat mew.

> 'I had rather be a kitten and cry mew . . .
> Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree.'
> I. *King Henry IV.* III. 1.

Not harsh and crabbed. Comus, 477.

267. *A robusteous, periwig-pated fellow. Hamlet*, III. 2.

Gives us pause. Hamlet, III. 1.

268. *He repeated the famous lines in Milton.* Though these words are referred to admiringly by Burke in *The Sublime and Beautiful* he does not seem to have quoted them in the House of Commons. Is not Hazlitt thinking of the occasion upon which Brougham used the quotation with immense effect at the Queen's trial, 1820? (See Greville's *Memoirs*, 1899 edit., I. 40.)

What seem'd its head. Paradise Lost, II. 672.

Fell still-born. Cf. vol. VI. *Table Talk*, p. 65 and note.

Lord Liverpool. Robert Banks Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool (1770-1828), Premier of England 1812-1827.

Mr. William Ward. ? William Ward, financier (1787-1849), who was returned to Parliament as a Tory in 1826 for the city of London.

Native to ['and endued unto'] *that element. Hamlet*, IV. 7.

Subdued to the ['even to the very'] *quality. Othello*, I. 3.

The late Lord Chatham (1708-1778). He began life as a cornet of dragoons (See p. 269).

That Roan shall be my throne. 1 *King Henry IV.*, II. 3.

269. *He spoke* [taught] *as one having authority. S. Matthew*, vii. 29.

270. *A few termes coude* [hadde] *he. The Prologue*, 639. But the lines are told of the Somnour not the Monk.

Will halt for it. Hamlet, II. 2.

271. *Mr. Place of Charing Cross.* Francis Place (1771-1854) the radical tailor.

Trampled under the hoofs. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution.*

Sir Francis Burdett (1770-1844). He was the most popular politician of his day.

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271. *Dr. Johnson had a wish.* See Boswell's *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, (II. 138-9).
Sir William Curtis. The 'father' of the corporation of London, for which city he was M.P. for thirty-three years. He made his money in the Greenland fisheries, and then became a member of the banking firm of Robarts, Curtis and Co. (1752-1829).
The Speaker (Onslow). Arthur Onslow (1691-1768) was elected Speaker of the House of Commons in 1728 and re-elected in 1735, 1741, 1747 and 1754. He retired in 1761 with the reputation of being the firmest and most dignified holder of his office and authority.

272. *Give his own little Senate laws.* Pope's Prologue to Mr. Addison's *Cato* and also *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 209.
They look only at the stop-watch. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Book III. chap. 12.
Hit the house between wind and water. See vol. IV., *The Spirit of the Age*, 227.

273. *Servile ministers. King Lear*, III. 2.
Jack Davies. See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, p. 89.
Note. *Making the worse appear the better reason. Paradise Lost*, II. 113.

274. *An indifferent History of James II.* Charles James Fox's *A History of the early Part of the Reign of James the Second* was published by Lord Holland in 1808.
A colleague of Lord Grenville. Fox was Foreign Secretary in the 'Broad-bottomed' or 'All the Talents' ministry, formed by Lord Grenville on the death of Pitt in 1806.
Like proud seas under him. Two Noble Kinsmen, II. 1.
It was in the Louvre. In 1802. See *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, I. 91. and vol. III. of the present edition, *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, p. 421.
Guercino. Gianfrancesco Barbieri or Guercino da Cento, because of his squint (1590-1666), of Bologna.
Domenichino. Domenicho Zampieri (1581-1641), also of Bologna.

275. *Does he wind into a subject like a serpent?* Boswell's *Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill (II. 260).
Letter to a Noble Lord. Burke died two years after the publication of his *Letter*, his only important further writing being the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, 1796.
Note. *Tom Paine.* Thomas Paine (1737-1809) the deist.

276. *The Leviathan. A Letter to a Noble Lord* (Bohn, V. 129).
The Abbé Sieyes's pigeon-holes. Ibid., p. 142.
The proud keep of Windsor. Ibid., p. 137.
Shut the gates of genius [mercy] *on mankind.* Gray's *Elegy*, 17.
To leave no rubs or botches. Macbeth, III. 1.

277. *Learn to write slow.* Cf.

> 'Take time enough—all other graces
> Will soon fill up their proper places.'

Byron's 'Advice to the Messrs. H—— and H—— to preach slow,' 8. And also

> 'Learn to read slow; all other graces
> Will follow in their proper places.'
> William Walker's *Art of Reading.*

The phrase of Ancient Pistol. 2 *King Henry IV.*, and *King Henry V.*

278. *Fancies and good nights.* 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2.
Dull as the lake that slumbers. Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 312.
'*Made fierce with dark keeping.*' Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book I., iv. 7.

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279. *Became his glittering bride.* Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, III. 735-6.
Dilettanti Society. An association founded in 1734 to promote the study of antique art in England.
Note. *Stentor. Iliad.* v. 783.
Note. *Political House that Jack Built.* A squib of William Hone's, published in 1819.
Note. *Mr. C. Wynne.* Charles Watkin Williams Wynne (1775-1850). He was proposed for Speaker June 2, 1817, but Manners-Sutton was preferred to him. Canning said that the only objection to him was that 'one would be sometimes tempted to say Mr. Squeaker,' alluding to his voice. See vol. III. *Political Essays*, note to p. 213.

ESSAY XXV. ON A PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISH LADY, BY VANDYKE

280. *Where all is conscience.* Chaucer's *Prologue*, 150.
Last recesses of the mind. Dryden, *Translation of Second Satire of Persius*, line 133.
282. *This hand of yours requires. Othello*, III. 4. ['Sweating devil.']
283. *Qualified . . . very craftily. Othello*, II. 3.
Mind's eye. Hamlet, I. 2.
284. *Trod the primrose path. Hamlet*, I. 3.
285. *Stupidly good. Paradise Lost*, IX. 465.
An eye to threaten and command. Hamlet, III. 4.
287. *Leave stings.* Cf.

> 'Who, for the poor renown of being smart,
> Would leave a sting within a brother's heart?'
> Young's *Love of Fame*, II. 113.

290. *While by the power.* Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey.*
Come then, the colours and the ground prepare. Pope, *Moral Essays*, Ep. II.
292. *The whole gallery at Fonthill.* 'Vathek' Beckford's place. See the volume of Hazlitt's writings on art.
The taste of the great in pictures. The rest of the essay from this point appeared in Hazlitt's *Commonplaces*, taken from *The Examiner*, 1823.
Note. *Day's garish eye. Il Penseroso*, 141.
293. *Mr. Holwell Carr.* William Holwell Carr (1758-1830), art connoisseur. He exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1797-1820 as an honorary exhibitor.
Sir George Beaumont. Sir George Howard Beaumont, Bart. (1753-1827), amateur painter and patron of artists.
Bosoms and businesses of men. Bacon, Dedication to Essays.
Trifles light as air. Othello, III. 3.
Tintoret. Jacopo Robusti or Tintoretto (from his father's trade, dyeing), (1518-1594), one of Ruskin's 'five supreme painters.'

ESSAY XXVI. ON NOVELTY AND FAMILIARITY

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, vol. XIII., No. 50, 1825, with additions.

294. *Custom hath made it in him. Hamlet*, V. 1.
295. *Give us pause. Hamlet*, III. 1.
297. *Send the hearers weeping. King Richard II.*, V. 1.

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293. *They beat the game home.* Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. iv.

Talma. François Joseph Talma (1763-1826). See *ante*, p. 83.

295. *'The Governess.'* By Eyre or Maria Edgeworth (1755-1840).

302. *Die if he cannot be ignorant just.* 'Die if a man be arithmetic just.' Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. iv. 201.

L. . . . M. These blanks are filled in 'Listen' and 'Matthews' by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt.

Lamb's wine. A beverage of ripe juice and spirit etc.

Romance and Dapple. Don Quixote's steed and Sancho Panza's monkey.

There is an inward soul-sickness. Martial, *Epigrams*, Bk. xii. Ep. xc. See Addison's *Spectator*, No. 44.

The late Mr. Kemble . . . Richard III. Macready and King Richard III, an answer to [Whately's] *Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespear* (1817). See vol. v. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, note to p. 101. Kemble died in 1823.

301. *The silver-voiced Anna.* Cf. J. P. Kemble's *Fugitive Pieces*, York, 1780, the 'Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Inchbald's Husband,' lines 14, 15,

> '. . . widow'd Anna's voice,
> Sweet as the harps of Heav'n . . .'

Tamerlane. Rowe's tragedy (1702). Mrs. Siddons acted in it at Drury Lane, Feb. 3, 1797.

Alexander the Great. The second title of Lee's tragedy, *The Rival Queens* (1678).

302. *Hope travels through* [*when we die*]. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. iv. 273.

The dregs of life. Dryden, *Aureng-zebe*, iv. 1.

Compacted of imagination. Midsummer Night's Dream, v. 1. 'Of imagination all compact.'

Reason panders will. Hamlet, iii. 4.

303. *Dallied with the innocence of love. Twelfth Night*, ii. 4.

The story of Federigo Alberigi. Boccaccio, *Decameron* (Fifth Day, Novel ix.)

Those notable discoveries that Pope was a poet. See vol. iv. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 259; vol. v. *Lectures on the English Poets*, pp. 69-71; and vol. vi. *Table Talk*, notes to pp. 210 and 223. See also Hazlitt's Essay 'On the Question whether Pope was a Poet' in *The New Scots Magazine*, February 1818.

Her Simple Story. Elizabeth Inchbald's (1753-1821) *A Simple Story* was published in 1791. Cf. a letter of Hazlitt's to Miss Stoddart, *Memoirs of W. Hazlitt*, i. 153.

304. *Simple movement of her finger. Les Confessions*, Partie i. Liv. ii.

The letter in the New Eloise. Premiere Partie, Lettre xxiii.

Glassy essence. Measure for Measure, ii. 2.

Love's golden rigol. 2 King Henry IV., iv. 4.

And bade the lovely scenes. Collins, *Ode on the Passions*, 32.

305. *Mr. Kean stamped himself the first night in Shylock.* See vol. i. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, note to p. 298.

Mrs. Siddons did not succeed the first time. See vol. i. *The Round Table*, note to p. 156.

306. *Old Dr. Chauncey.* Charles Chauncey, M.D., F.S.A. (1706-1777).

Goodman's Fields . . . Richard. See vol. i. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, note to p. 298.

Queen Katherine. In Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII.*

Belvidera. In Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682).



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306. *Jane Shore.* In N. Rowe's tragedy (1713).
Calista. In N. Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* (1703).
The Mourning Bride. Congreve's tragedy (1697).
When I first came from Bath. Mrs. Siddons was a member of the Cheltenham Company when she was recommended to the notice of Garrick, and then obtained an engagement at Drury Lane (1775).
Lord Byron says. See Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, 1824 (p. 106).
Sir Isaac Newton was not twenty. He seems to have been twenty-four. See Voltaire's *Lettres sur les Anglais.*
Harvey . . . at eighteen. The first lectures in which he set forth his views were delivered in 1616, in his 38th year.
Berkeley . . . Essay on Vision. Bishop Berkeley's *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* was published in 1709. He was born in 1685.
Hartley's great principle. David Hartley's (1705-1757) great work, *Observations on Man* (1749), was begun when he was about twenty-five.
Hume . . . Treatise on Human Nature. David Hume's (1711-1776) Treatise was published in 1739.
Galileo. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was appointed mathematical professor at Pisa when he was twenty-four.
Leibnitz. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716). He was refused a Doctor's Degree at Leipzig in his twentieth year on the ground of his youth.
Euler. Leonard Euler (1707-1783), of Basel. At the age of nineteen he was second in a competition projected by the Paris Academy for the best treatise on the masting of ships.

307. *With heedless haste.* 'With wanton heed and giddy cunning.' *L'Allegro*, 141.

308. *Like the sweet south. Twelfth Night*, I. 1.
Like poppies spread ['the snow falls']. Burns, *Tam o' Shanter.*
Mandeville. Bernard Mandeville (1670?-1733), author of *The Fable of the Bees* (1714).

310. *Defoe's romance* : *i.e.*, *Robinson Crusoe.*
Round which, with tendrils. Wordsworth, *Personal Talk*, III.

ESSAY XXVII. ON OLD ENGLISH WRITERS AND SPEAKERS

From *The New Monthly Magazine*, vol. XIII., No. 49, 1825, with additions.

311. *Marmontel.* Jean François Marmontel (1723-1799), author of the *Contes Moraux* (1761).
Crebillon. Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon (1674-1762), dramatic poet.
Marivaux. Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux (1688-1763), author of *Marianne* (1731-1741), a romance and many comedies. Voltaire said he knew all the bye-paths of the human heart, but not the highway.
La Harpe. Jean François de la Harpe (1739-1803), whose works have acted as a standard of literary criticism.
To this obscure and wild. Paradise Lost, XI. 284.
On that fair fountain. Hamlet, III. 4.
Note. *A splendid edition of Goldsmith.* Washington Irving edited a 4-volume edition of *The Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith* in 1825 (Paris).

312. *The proper study of the French.* 'The proper study of mankind is man,' Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. II.
St. Evremont. Charles Marguetel de Saint-Denis Seigneur de Saint-Evremond

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(1613-1703), one of the most brilliant of French satirists. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

312. Note. *What's he that wishes for more men from England. King Henry V.*, IV. 3.

313. *Marlowe's.* Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1604).
Captain Medwin or his Lordship must have made a mistake. See *Conversations of Lord Byron*, p. 105.
Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour.' Acted 1596.
Massinger's 'A new Way to Pay old Debts.' (1633.)
Ford's . . . 'Tis Pity She's a Whore.' Printed 1633.
Grows with our growth. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle II. 136.

314. *Mr. Shee.* Sir Martin Archer Shee (1770-1850), portrait painter from the age of 16 onwards. He was knighted upon being made President of the Royal Academy in 1830.
Burnt the Memoirs. Moore sold the Byron Memoirs to Murray, November 1821, and in May 1824 rebought and burned them.
Note. *Tales of the Crusaders. i.e. The Betrothed and the Talisman*, published in 1825.

315. *Leave all and follow it.* Cf. *S. Matthew*, xix. 21.
De omne scibile et quibusdam aliis. See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 214.

316. *Selden's notes on Drayton's Poly-Olbion.* 'The learned John Selden' edited Drayton's work in the folio of 1613-22.
Stowe. See *ante*, note to p. 229.
Holinshed. See *ante*, note to p. 229.
Camden. William Camden (1551-1623), whose *Britannia* was published in 1586.
Saxo-Grammaticus. The greatest of the early Danish chroniclers (fl. end of 12th century).
Dugdale. Sir William Dugdale (1605-1686), antiquarian, whose *Monasticon Anglicanum* was published 1655-1673.
Job Orton. (1717-1783). His reputation rests on his Letters rather than on his preaching.

317. *Caryl's 'Commentaries upon Job.'* Probably the folio edition of 1676-7 of *An Exposition with Practical Observations on the Book of Job.* By Joseph Caryl, 2 vols.; the 1648-1666 quarto edition was in 12 vols.
The Cabbala. See *ante*, note to p. 242.
Warton. Thomas Warton (1728-1790), author of *The History of English Poetry* (1774-1781). The same sonnet is quoted in vol. V. *Lectures on the English Poets*, p. 120.

318. *Delia-Cruscan.* See vol. V. *Lectures on the English Poets*, note to p. 148.
Calm pleasures there abide, majestic pains. Wordsworth's *Laodamia*.
Earth destroys those raptures. Ibid.

319. *Even to the crack of doom. Macbeth*, IV. 1.
Poor Peter Peebles. The litigious drunkard in *Redgauntlet*.
The last and almost worst of them. Redgauntlet was published in 1824.
Nanty Ewart. Captain of the smuggler's brig in *Redgauntlet*.
And her whose foot. Redgauntlet, Book II. chap. viii.
Old true-penny. Cf. 'Art thou there, true-penny?' etc. *Hamlet*, I. 5.
The catch that blind Willie and his wife, etc. Redgauntlet, Letter X.

320. *Elysian beauty, melancholy grace.* Wordsworth's *Laodamia*.
At the birth of nature. Paradise Lost, VII. 102.
Pawing to get free. Paradise Lost, VII. 464.
Whose body nature was. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. I. 268 ['and God the soul']

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Pym, Hampden, Sydney. John Pym (b. 1584), one of the 'five members'; John Hampden (1594-1643), the opponent of ship-money; and Algernon Sidney (1622-1682), executed for his share in the Rye-house Plot.

321. *Mr. Southey's Book of the Church.* Published 1824.
Pure well of English undefiled. 'Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled' *The Faerie Queene*, IV. ii. 32.
Baxter. See *ante*, note to p. 243.
Calamy's Non-Conformist's Memorial. See vol. III. *Political Essays*, note to p. 265.
Note. *The author of Virginius.* James Sheridan Knowles (1784-1862). Macready produced *Virginius*, his best play, in 1820, at Covent Garden, after it had appeared in the provinces.

322. *Mr. Irvine.* Edward Irving.
Prick-eared. Cf. 'prick-eared cur of Iceland,' *King Henry V.*, II. 1. The word was commonly applied to Roundheads because of the tight black skull-cap drawn over the head, which left the ears exposed.
Sir J. Suckling. (1609-1641.)
Wycherley, Congreve, Rochester, and Waller. See vol. V. *Lectures on the English Poets and Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.*

323. *Mr. Tracey's 'Ideologie.'* Antoine Louis Claude Comte Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836), whose *Élémens d' Idéologie* was published in 1817-1818.

ESSAY XXVIII. MADAME PASTA AND MADEMOISELLE MARS

From the *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. XIII. No. 49, 1825.

324. *Mademoiselle Mars.* Anne Françoise Boutet-Monvel (1779-1847), the clever impersonator of Molière's heroines at the Théâtre Français. Her father, Moutet, was an actor, and her mother, Mars, an actress.
Madame Pasta. Giuditta Pasta, a Jewish opera-singer of Milanese birth (1798-1865). Her greatest triumphs were in Paris and London between 1825 and 1833.

325. *Nina.* An Italian opera, produced at Naples, May 1787, and played at the King's Theatre, London, May 26, 1825, with Pasta as 'Nina.'

326. *Shepherdess. The Winter's Tale*, IV. 3.

327. *Though that their art be nature.* 'Though that his joy be joy, etc.' *Othello*, I. 1.

328. *Schiller's Robbers.* 1781.
Klopstock's Messiah. Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's (1724-1803) poem was published in 1748-1773.

329. *Those noble outlines . . . at Hampton Court.* The Cartoons of Raphael.
Chantry. See *ante*, note to p. 89.
Guiderius and Arviragus. Cymbeline, III. 6, and IV. 2.

330. Note. *Valeria.* A comedy of Scribe's, produced in 1822 with Mlle. Mars in the title-rôle.

331. *Girodet.* Anne Louis Girodet-De-Roussy-Trioson, French historical painter and writer (1767-1824), a pupil of David.
Monsieur Chateaubriand. François René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), of noble Breton extraction, Royalist and writer of perfect prose.

333. *Merrimee.* J. F. L. Mérimée. See *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, I. 87, 89. See also vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 319.

334. *Foregone conclusion. Othello*, III. 3.

THE PLAIN SPEAKER

ESSAY XXIX. SIR WALTER SCOTT, RACINE, AND SHAKESPEAR

336. *The still small voice is wanting.* 1 *Kings* xix. 12.

337. *Four lagging winters.* *King Richard II.*, i. 3. ['End in a word.']
Come home to the bosoms. Bacon, *Dedication to Essays.*
The perilous stuff. *Macbeth*, v. 3.
Give sorrow words. *Macbeth*, iv. 3.

338. *Gabble most brutishly.* *The Tempest*, i. 2.

'But wouldst gabble like
A thing most brutish.'

339. *Sailing with supreme dominion.* Gray, *Progress of Poesy*, iii. 3.
David Ritchie. See *ante*, note to p. 207.
The Maid and the Magpye. See vol. viii. *A View of the English Stage*, p. 244.
Mrs. Inchbald's 'Nature and Art.' Published 1796.

340. *O'er informing power.* Cf. 'And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.' Dryden, *Absolom and Achitophel*, i. 158.

341. *Globose.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, v. 753 and vii. 357.
A Dukedom to a beggarly denier. *King Richard III.*, i. 2.
The little dogs and all. *King Lear*, iii. 6.
Chronicle of the line of Brute. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book ii. canto x.

342. *Lay my head to the East.* 'Na, na! Not that way, the feet to the east,' *Guy Mannering*, chap. xv.
Nothing but his unkind daughters. *King Lear*, iii. 4.
By making Madge Wildfire ascribe. *The Heart of Midlothian*, ? vol. ii. chap. v. and vi.
They are old like him. Cf. *King Lear*, ii. 4.
The earth hath bubbles. *Macbeth*, i. 3.
And enjoin'd silence.

['You seem to understand me
By each at once,' etc.]

Macbeth, i. 3.

And then they melted into thin air.

['Whither are they vanished?
Into the air.']

Macbeth, i. 3.

But cf. *The Tempest*, iv. 1.

'Are melted into air, into thin air.'

343. *The geese of Micklestane Muir.* *The Black Dwarf*, chap. ii.
Five editions deep in Captain Medwin's Conversations. Two editions of Captain Thomas Medwin's *Conversations of Lord Byron, noted during a Residence with his Lordship at Pisa in the years* 1821 *and* 1822, appeared in 1824, and editions followed in Paris, New York and Germany.
There 's magic in the web. *Othello*, iii. 4.
All appliances and means to boot. 2 *King Henry IV.*, iii. 1.
Sees Helen's beauty. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1.
'Tis common. *Othello*, iii. 3.

344. *Not a jot.* *Ibid.*

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344. *By yon marble heaven.* *Othello*, III. 3.
Like the Propontic. *Ibid.*
The dialogue between Hubert and Arthur. *King John*, IV. 1.
That between Brutus and Cassius. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2.
Bertram. In *Guy Mannering.*

ESSAY XXX. ON DEPTH AND SUPERFICIALITY

347. *A great but useless thinker.* ? Coleridge.
Dr. Spurzheim. See *ante*, note to p. 17.
348. *Spin round on its soft axle.* 'Spinning sleeps on her soft axle,' *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 165.
350. *Compunctious visitings of nature.* *Macbeth*, I. 5.
The 'wicked' Lord Lyttleton. Thomas, Lord Lyttelton (1744-1779), renowned for his profligacy. He seems to have died three days after a nocturnal warning. See Chambers's *Book of Days*, II. 625.
Mother Brownrigg. Elizabeth Brownrigg, who was executed in 1767 for whipping an apprentice to death. See vol. III. *Political Essays*, notes to pp. 220 and 238.
351. *Credo quia impossibile est.* A phrase of Tertullian's.
353. *Sweet oblivious antidote.* *Macbeth*, V. 3.
354. *Unquenchable fire.* *S. Mark*, IX. 44.
Note. *Search's 'Light of Nature Pursued.'* See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, note to p. 371.

ESSAY XXXI. ON RESPECTABLE PEOPLE

362. *Buys golden opinions.* *Macbeth*, I. 7.
The learned pate ducks to the golden fool. *Timon of Athens*, IV. 3.
Otway was left to starve. Thomas Otway, one of the greatest of English tragedians, was choked by eating too ravenously bread bought after a long fast.
Spenser, kept waiting. See Fuller's *Worthies.* The story is that Spenser petitioned Elizabeth thus:—

> 'I was promis'd on a time
> To have reason for my rhyme;
> From that time unto this season,
> I receiv'd nor rhyme nor reason.'

363. *His favourite poet Butler.* Samuel Butler (1612-1680). He was buried in St. Paul's Churchyard, Covent Garden, at the expense of his friend William Longueville of the Temple.
The time gives evidence of it. See *ante*, note to p. 136.
Parson Adams drinking his ale. *Joseph Andrews*, Book I. 2.
Peter Pounce. In *Joseph Andrews.*
The character of Captain Blifil. *Tom Jones*, Book II. 9.
Pope somewhere exclaims. ['Or slaves or cowards']. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. IV. 215.
364. *All honourable men.* *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2.



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ESSAY XXXII. ON THE JEALOUSY AND THE SPLEEN OF PARTY

365. *It is michin-malico.* *Hamlet*, III. 2.
With the Levite, that 'he is not one of those.' Cf. the story of the Pharisee, *St. Luke*, xviii. 2.
The snow-falls in the river. Burns' *Tam o' Shanter.* Cf. *ante*, note to p. 308.
The mighty dead. Thomson's *Seasons*, *Winter*, 431.

366. *So shall their anticipation.* *Hamlet*, II. 2.
The gaze and shew ['show and gaze'] *of the time.* *Macbeth*, v. 7.
Elysian beauty. Wordsworth's *Laodamia*.

367. *This, this is the unkindest cut of all.* *Julius Cæsar*, III. 2.
Mr. Chantry. See *ante*, note to p. 89.
It will never do. See vol. III. *Political Essays*, note to p. 361.
Rash judgments. Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey* (*Lyrical Ballads*, 1798).

368. *But 'tis the fall.* Pope, *Epilogue to Satires*, I. 143.
Madame Guyon. Jeanne Marie Bouvières de la Mothe Guyon, the French Quietist (1648-1717).
Canova's marble. See *ante*, note to p. 113.
Guido's canvas. Guido Reni, of the school of Bologna (1575-1642).
Thomas Little. Thomas Moore's (1779-1852) early erotic verses appeared (1801) as the 'Poetical Works of the late Thomas Little.'
Now in glimmer. Coleridge's *Christabel*, 169.

369. *From Paraclete's white walls.* Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, 348.
Swan-like end. *Merchant of Venice*, III. 2.
'Tis my vice ['It is my nature's plague'] *to spy into abuses.* *Othello*, III. 3.

370. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin?* *Jeremiah*, xiii. 23.
Married to immortal verse. *L'Allegro*, 137.
Thoughts that glow [breathe]. Gray, *The Progress of Poesy*, III. 3.
But his soul is fair. Thomson, *Castle of Indolence*, II. 30.

371. *Give us reason with his rhyme.* See *ante*, note to p. 362.
His dear Charmettes. Where Rousseau's happiest years were spent with Madame de Warens.
I care not, Fortune. Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, canto II. 3.
Books, dreams [dreams, books]. Wordsworth, *Personal Talk.* [will grow].
Note. *Ah! voila de la pervenche.* Rousseau's *Confessions*, part I. book VI.
Reveries of a Solitary Walker. Published in 1777.

373. *A witchery in the soft blue sky.* Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*, part I. 15.
Not by the sufferance of supernal power. *Paradise Lost*, I. 241.
Squeaked and gibbered in our streets. *Hamlet*, I. 1.
In his Treatise of Government. Published in 1689-1690.

374. *Blackstone and De Lolme.* Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780), whose *Commentaries on the Laws of England* were published in 1765-1769, and John Louis Delolme, a Genevan (1740-1806), whose work on *The Constitution of England* was published in French in 1771, and in English four years later.
The right divine of kings. Pope, *The Dunciad*, IV. 188.
Age of chivalry. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (*Select Works*, ed. Payne, II. 89).
Mr. Ricardo. David Ricardo (1772-1823), stockbroker and political economist.
With the laurel wreath. Southey was made poet-laureate in 1813.

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374. *Carnage as 'God's Daughter.'* See vol. I. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, note to p. 214.

Written the Friend. Coleridge's Series of Essays (1809-1810), 'to aid in the formation of fixed principles in politics, morals and religion.'

Like a devilish engine. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 17.

With looks commercing. *Il Penseroso*, 39.

375. *Doth part the flux.* *As You Like It*, II. 1.

The powers that be. *Romans*, xiii. 1.

Chop-fallen. *Hamlet*, v. 1.

For the good of the country. Cf. ''Twas for the good of my country that I should be abroad.' Farquhar, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, III. 2.

376. *The Bills of Mortality.* Weekly burial reports, first supplied by parish clerks in 1592-3.

Mr. Theodore Hook will cry 'Cockney.' See vol. VI. *Table Talk*, note to p. 98.

One-eyed M——. Probably John Murray, who had lost the sight of one eye through an accident.

377. *When they censure the age.* *The Beggar's Opera*, Air XII.

Done the State some service. *Othello*, v. 2.

378. *Like poor Morgan.* *Roderick Random*, chap. xxxiv.

Come betwixt the wind and their nobility. 1 *King Henry IV.*, I. 3.

The Liberal. The quarterly review which lasted for four numbers (1822-3). See vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, the Essay on Lord Byron, and notes to pp. 258 and 359.

The John Bull. Theodore Hook's Tory paper.

Mr. Jerdan. William Jerdan (1782-1869), editor of the Tory *Sun* (1813-17), and then identified for thirty-three years with the *Literary Gazette*.

The Examiner-Officer. ? a misprint for *Examiner* Office.

379. *Mr. Shelley's father.* Hobhouse's father, Sir Benjamin, was made a baronet in 1812. The Shelley baronets of Castle Goring, Sussex, were created in 1806.

Illustrations of Childe Harold. Historical Illustrations of the fourth canto of Childe Harold; containing Dissertations on the Ruins of Rome, and an Essay on Italian Literature (1818).

The member for Westminster. Hobhouse was elected in 1820 by a large majority.

The Essay on the Spirit of Monarchy. Hazlitt's essay was published in the second number of *The Liberal*.

This gentleman wrote off to Lord Byron. See Byron's *Letters and Journals* (ed. Prothero), VI. 167. Cf. vol. IV. *The Spirit of the Age*, p. 359 and note.

His Vision of Judgment. Byron's poem was published in No. I of *The Liberal*.

380. *I had spoken against Lalla Rookh.* Published in 1817. See vol. V. *Lectures on English Poets*, p. 152.

'Fudge Family.' Published in 1818.

Hulling on the flood. *Paradise Lost*, XI. 840.

Whistle me down the wind. *Othello*, III. 3.

Proved haggard. *Ibid.*

Tricksy. Cf. 'My tricksy spirit.' *The Tempest*, v. 1.

To view with scornful. Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 199-200.

381. *The account of the 'Characters of Shakespear's Plays.'* See vol. I. Bibliographical Note on p. 166.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN ACTION

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381. *The Gods . . . had made me poetical. As You Like It*, III. 3.
Not a true thing. Ibid.
The first thing the Westminster Review did. See *ante*, note to p. 183. In the very first number (Jan. 1824), the article being written by James Mill, assisted by his son John Stuart Mill. See Sir Leslie Stephen's *The English Utilitarians*, vol. III. p. 18.

382. *As Mr. Place lost Mr. Hobhouse his first election.* Hobhouse unsuccessfully contested Westminster as an advanced Liberal in 1818.

Note. *But not till then.* For this remark of Porson's see vol. VII., *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, p. 17.

AN ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN ACTION

Hazlitt had made the 'discovery' set forth in this essay and had begun to write the essay itself as early as 1798, when he had his memorable meeting with Coleridge. See the essay 'My First Acquaintance with Poets.' He did not, however, succeed in making himself understood by the poet, and when the book came to be published, its sale was slow and small, though Mr. W. C. Hazlitt (*Memoirs*, I. 112) relates that according to a tradition in the family it won the admiration of Mr. Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger. Hazlitt himself was proud of the essay, and continually refers to it in his later writings. See especially *A Letter to William Gifford*, vol. I. pp. 403 *et seq.*, where he explains the nature of the argument. Cf. also the essay on 'Self-Love' and the fragments of lectures on English Philosophy first published in *Literary Remains*. The variations made in the second edition from marginal notes in the author's copy (see Bibliographical Note) are few and trifling.

395. *An airy, notional good.* Cf.

> '————fugitive theme
> Of my pursuing verse, ideal shade,
> Notional good, by fancy only made.'
> Prior, *Solomon, or the Vanity of the World*, I. 15-7.

398. Note. *Usher.* James Usher's (1720-1772) *An Introduction to the Theory of the Human Mind*, was published in 1771.

409. Note. '*Eros, thou yet behold'st me*,' *etc. Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV. Scene 14.

410. Note. *Rousseau . . . not a Frenchman.* Rousseau was born at Geneva, whither his ancestors had removed from Paris as far back as 1529.

415. Note. Berkeley's *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, published in 1709.

427. *Junius has remarked, etc.* In his letter to George III. (Dec. 19, 1769).

429. '*Short-lived pleasure*,' *etc.* Cf.

> '————O fleeting joys
> Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes.'
> *Paradise Lost*, X. 741-2.

Note. See Preface to *The Lyrical Ballads* (2nd edition, 1801), reprinted with variations in the succeeding editions of the poet's works. (*Poetical Works*, ed. T. Hutchinson, p. 940.)

NOTES

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430. *To add, etc.* This sentence, which seems obscure, should perhaps begin 'I may add that,' etc.
The Essay on the Inequality of Mankind. Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, 1755.
'*Faithful remembrancer.*' Cowper, *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture*, II.
'*His high endeavour*,' *etc.* Cowper, *The Task*, v. 901.
The System of Nature. Hazlitt wrongly attributes to Jean Baptiste de Mirabaud (1675-1760) the *Système de la Nature* of Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789), published in 1770.

REMARKS ON THE SYSTEMS OF HARTLEY AND HELVETIUS

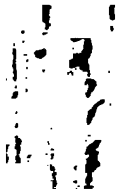
434. *Hartley.* David Hartley (1705-1757), whose *Observations on Man*, containing his famous principle of the Association of Ideas, appeared in 1749.
Helvetius. Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715-1771), whose famous work *De L'Esprit* appeared in 1758.
Note. *Butler in the Preface to his Sermons.* The *Fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel* were published in 1726.
441. *As has been explained, etc.* An imperfect sentence. Probably Hazlitt wrote, 'This has been explained,' etc.
443. Note. Sir Kenelm Digby's (1603-1665) *Observations upon Religio Medici* were published in 1643, and were afterwards frequently reprinted in editions of that work.
446. Note. Published in 1780.
447. *Mr. Mac-Intosh.* Sir James Mackintosh's lectures on 'The Law of Nature and Nations' were delivered at Lincoln's Inn Hall in 1799.
450. '*In subduing*,' *etc.* *Othello*, Act I. Scene 3.
453. '*Sentir est penser.*' This well-known aphorism of the Sensational School is attributed to Destutt de Tracy. See *ante*, note to p. 323.
More drossy and divisible. Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, I. 319.
454. Note. *Condillac.* Etienne de Condillac (1715-1780), whose *Traité des Sensations* appeared in 1754.
Note. *The book De l'Esprit.* See *ante*, note to p. 434.
Note. '*Me voici*,' *etc.* *Émile*, Liv. IV. (*Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard*).
457. '*Discourse of reason.*' *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene II.
464. '*Theory of Moral Sentiments.*' Published in 1759.
465. *Don Quixote.* See Part I., Book III., chaps. 25 and 26.

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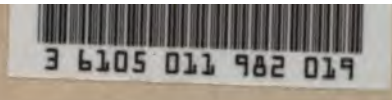











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